CASTES AND TRIBES

OF

SOUTHERN INDIA

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BY

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VOLUME V.

MARAKKĀYAR.—The Marakkāyars are described, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as "a Tamil-speaking Musalman tribe of mixed Hindu and Musalman origin, the people of which are usually traders. They seem to be distinct from the Labbais (*q.v.*) in several respects, but the statistics of the two have apparently been confused, as the numbers of the Marakkāyars are smaller than they should be." Concerning the Marakkāyars of the South Arcot district, Mr. Francis writes as follows.* "The Marakkāyars are largely big traders with other countries such as Ceylon and the Straits Settlements, and own most of the native coasting craft. They are particularly numerous in Porto Novo. The word Marakkāyar is usually derived from the Arabic markab, a boat. The story goes that, when the first immigrants of this class (who, like the Labbais, were driven from their own country by persecutions) landed on the Indian shore, they were naturally asked who they were, and whence they came. In answer they pointed to their boats, and pronounced the word markab, and they became in consequence known to the Hindus as Marakkāyars, or

* Gazetteer of the South Arcot district.

the people of markab. The Musalmans of pure descent hold themselves to be socially superior to the Marakkāyars, and the Marakkāyars consider themselves better than the Labbais. There is, of course, no religious bar to intermarriages between these different sub-divisions, but such unions are rare, and are usually only brought about by the offer of strong financial inducements to the socially superior party. Generally speaking, the pure-bred Musalmans differ from those of mixed descent by dressing themselves and their women in the strict Musalman fashion, and by speaking Hindustāni at home among themselves. Some of the Marakkāyars are now following their example in both these matters, but most of them affect the high hat of plaited coloured grass and the tartan (kambāyam) waist-cloth. The Labbais also very generally wear these, and so are not always readily distinguishable from the Marakkāyars, but some of them use the Hindu turban and waist-cloth, and let their womankind dress almost exactly like Hindu women. In the same way, some Labbais insist on the use of Hindustāni in their houses, while others speak Tamil. There seems to be a growing dislike to the introduction of Hindu rites into domestic ceremonies, and the processions and music, which were once common at marriages, are slowly giving place to a simpler ritual more in resemblance with the nikka ceremony of the Musalman faith."

Of 13,712 inhabitants of Porto Novo returned at the census, 1901, as many as 3,805 were Muhammadans. "The ordinary vernacular name of the town is Farangipēttai or European town, but the Musalmans call it Muhammad Bandar (Port). The interest of the majority of the inhabitants centres in matters connected with the sea. A large proportion of them earn their living either as owners of, or sailors in, the boats which ply

between the place and Ceylon and other parts, and it is significant that the most popular of the unusually large number of Musalman saints who are buried in the town is one Mālumiyar, who was apparently in his lifetime a notable sea-captain. His fame as a sailor has been magnified into the miraculous, and it is declared that he owned ten or a dozen ships, and used to appear in command of all of them simultaneously. He has now the reputation of being able to deliver from danger those who go down to the sea in ships, and sailors setting out on a voyage or returning from one in safety usually put an offering in the little box kept at his darga, and these sums are expended in keeping that building lighted and whitewashed. Another curious darga in the town is that of Araikāsu Nāchiyar, or the one pie lady. Offerings to her must on no account be worth more than one pie ($\frac{1}{192}$ of a rupee); tributes in excess of that value are of no effect. If sugar for so small an amount cannot be procured, the devotee spends the money on chunam (lime) for her tomb, and this is consequently covered with a superabundance of whitewash. Stories are told of the way in which the valuable offerings of rich men have altogether failed to obtain her favour, and have had to be replaced by others of the regulation diminutive dimensions. The chief mosque is well kept. Behind it are two tombs, which stand at an odd angle with one another, instead of being parallel as usual. The legend goes that once upon a time there was a great saint called Hāfiz Mir Sāhib, who had an even more devout disciple called Saiyad Shah. The latter died and was duly buried, and not long after the saint died also. The disciple had always asked to be buried at the feet of his master, and so the grave of this latter was so placed that his feet were opposite the head

of his late pupil. But his spirit recognised that the pupil was really greater than the master, and when men came later to see the two graves they found that the saint had turned his tomb round so that his feet no longer pointed with such lack o respect towards the head of his disciple." *

In the Madras Census Report, 1901, the Jōnagans are separated from the Marakkāyars, and are described as Musalman traders of partly Hindu parentage. And, in the Gazetteer of South Arcot, Mr. Francis says that "the term Jōnagan or Sōnagan, meaning a native of Sōnagan or Arabia, is applied by Hindus to both Labbais and Marakkāyars, but it is usually held to have a contemptuous flavour about it." There is some little confusion concerning the exact application of the name Jōnagan, but I gather that it is applied to sea-fishermen and boatmen, while the more prosperous traders are called Marakkāyars. A point, in which the Labbais are said to differ from the Marakkāyars, is that the former are Hanafis, and the latter Shāfis.

The Marakkāyars are said to admit converts from various Hindu classes, who are called Pulukkais, and may not intermarry with the Marakkāyars for several generations, or until they have become prosperous.

In one form of the marriage rites, the ceremonial extends over four days. The most important items on the first day are fixing the mehr (bride-price) in the presence of the vakils (representatives), and the performance of the nikka rite by the Kāzi. The nikka kudbha is read, and the hands of the contracting couple are united by male elders, the bride standing within a screen. During the reading of the kudbha, a sister of

* Gazetteer of the South Arcot district.

the bridegroom ties a string of black beads round the bride's neck. All the women present set up a roar, called kulavi-idal. On the following day, the couple sit among women, and the bridegroom ties a golden tāli on the bride's neck. On the third or fourth day a ceremony called pāpārakkolam, or Brāhman disguise, is performed. The bride is dressed like a Brāhman woman, and holds a brass vessel in one hand, and a stick in the other. Approaching the bridegroom, she strikes him gently, and says "Did not I give you buttermilk and curds? Pay me for them." The bridegroom then places a few tamarind seeds in the brass vessel, but the bride objects to this, and demands money, accompanying the demand with strokes of the stick. The man then places copper, silver, and gold coins in the vessel, and the bride retires in triumph to her chamber.

Like the Labbais, the Marakkāyars write Tamil in Arabic characters, and speak a language called Arab-Tamil, in which the Kurān and other books have been published. (*See* Labbai.)

Maralu (sand).—A gōtra of Kurni.

Mārān or Mārāyan.—The Mārāyans are summed up, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as being "temple servants and drummers in Malabar. Like many of the Malabar castes, they must have come from the east coast, as their name frequently occurs in the Tanjore inscriptions of 1013 A.D. They followed then the same occupation as that by which they live to-day, and appear to have held a tolerably high social position. In parts of North Malabar they are called Oc'chan."

"The development of this caste," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,* "is interesting. In Chirakkal, the

* Madras Census Report, 1891.

northernmost tāluk of the Malabar district, and in the adjoining Kasargōd tāluk of South Canara, Mārāyans are barbers, serving Nāyars and higher castes ; in the Kottayam and Kurumbranād tāluks they are barbers and drummers, and also officiate as purōhits (priests) at the funeral ceremonies of Nāyars. In the latter capacity they are known in those parts also as Attikurissi Mārāyan. Going still further south, we find the Nāyar purōhit called simply Attikurissi, omitting the Mārāyan, and he considers it beneath his dignity to shave. Nevertheless, he betrays his kinship with the Mārāyan of the north by the privilege which he claims of cutting the first hair when a Nāyar is shaved after funeral obsequies. On the other hand, the drummer, who is called Mārāyan, or honorifically Mārār, poses as a temple servant, and would be insulted if it were said that he was akin to the shaving Mārāyan of the north. He is considered next in rank only to Brāhmans, and would be polluted by the touch of Nāyars. He loses caste by eating the food of Nāyars, but the Nāyars also lose caste by eating his food. A proverb says that a Mārāyan has four privileges :—

1. Pāni, or drum, beaten with the hand.
2. Kōni, or bier, *i.e.*, the making of the bier.
3. Natumittam, or shaving.
4. Tirumittam, or sweeping the temple courts.

"In North Malabar a Mārāyan performs all the above duties even now. In the south there appears to have been a division of labour, and there a Mārāyan is in these days only a drummer and temple servant. Funeral rites are conducted by an Attikurissi Mārāyan, otherwise known as simply Attikurissi, and shaving is the duty of the Velakattalavan. This appears to have been the case for many generations, but I have not attempted to distinguish between the two sections, and have classed all as

barbers. Moreover, it is only in parts of South Malabar that the caste has entirely given up the profession of barber; and, curiously enough, these are the localities where Nambūdiri influence is supreme. The Mārāyans there appear to have confined themselves to officiating as drummers in temples, and to have obtained the title of Ambalavāsi; and, in course of time, they were even honoured with sambandham of Nambūdiris. In some places an attempt is made to draw a distinction between Mārāyan and Mārāyar, the former denoting the barber, and the latter, which is merely the honorific plural, the temple servant. There can, however, be little doubt that this is merely an *ex post facto* argument in support of the alleged superiority of those Mārāyans who have abandoned the barber's brush. It may be here noted that it is common to find barbers acting as musicians throughout the Madras Presidency, and that there are several other castes in Malabar, such as the Tiyyans, Mukkuvans, etc., who employ barbers as purōhits at their funeral ceremonies."

In the Cochin Census Report, 1901, Mr. M. Sankara Menon writes that the Mārārs are "Sūdras, and, properly speaking, they ought to be classed along with Nāyars. Owing, however, to their close connection with services in temples, and the absence of free interdining or intermarriage with Nāyars, they are classed along with Ambalavāsis. They are drummers, musicians, and storekeepers in temples. Like Tiyattu Nambiyars, some sections among them also draw figures of the goddess in Bhagavati temples, and chant songs. In some places they are also known as Kuruppus. Some sub-castes among them do not dine, or intermarry. As they have generally to serve in temples, they bathe if they touch Nāyars. In the matter of marriage (tāli-kettu and

sambandham), inheritance, period of pollution, etc., they follow customs exactly like those of Nāyars. In the southern tāluks Elayads officiate as purōhits, but, in the northern tāluks, their own castemen take the part of the Elayads in their srādha ceremonies. The tāli-kettu is likewise performed by Tirumalpāds in the southern tāluks, but by their own castemen, called Enangan, in the northern tāluks. Their castemen or Brāhmans unite themselves with their women in sambandham. As among Nāyars, purificatory ceremonies after funerals, etc., are performed by Cheethiyans or Nāyar priests."

For the following detailed note on the Mārāns of Travancore I am indebted to Mr. N. Subramani Iyer. The name Mārān has nothing to do with maranam or death, as has been supposed, but is derived from the Tamil root mar, to beat. In the Tanjore inscriptions of the eleventh century, the caste on the Coromandel coast appears to have been known by this name. The Mārāns correspond to the Ōcchans of the Tamil country, and a class of Mārāns in North Malabar are sometimes called by this designation. In the old revenue records of the Travancore State, Mangalyam appears to be the term made use of. The two well-known titles of the caste are Kuruppu and Panikkar, both conveying the idea of a person who has some allotted work to perform. In modern days, English-educated men appear to have given these up for Pillai, the titular affix added to the name of the Sūdra population generally.

Mārāns may be divided into two main divisions, viz., Mārāns who called themselves Mārārs in North Travancore, and who now hesitate to assist other castes in the performance of their funeral rites; and Mārāns who do not convert their caste designation into an honorific plural, and act as priests for other castes. This distinction

is most clearly marked in North Travancore, while to the south of Alleppey the boundary line may be said to remain only dim. In this part of the country, therefore, a fourfold division of the caste is the one best known to the people, namely Orunul, Irunul, Cheppat, and Kulanji. The Orunuls look upon themselves as higher than the Irunuls, basing their superiority on the custom obtaining among them of marrying only once in their lifetime, and contracting no second alliance after the first husband's death. Living, however, with a Brāhman, or one of a distinctly higher caste, is tolerated among them in the event of that calamity. The word Orunul means one string, and signifies the absence of widow marriage. Among the Irunuls (two strings) the tāli-tier is not necessarily the husband, nor is a second husband forbidden after the death of the first. Cheppat and Kulanji were once mere local varieties, but have now become separate sub-divisions. The males of the four sections, but not the females, interdine. With what rapidity castes sub-divide and ramify in Travancore may be seen from the fact of the existence of a local variety of Mārāns called Muttal, meaning substitute or emergency employée, in the Kalkulam tāluk, who are believed to represent an elevation from a lower to a higher class of Mārāns, rendered necessary by a temple exigency. The Mārāns are also known as Asupānis, as they alone are entitled to sound the two characteristic musical instruments, of Malabar temples, called asu and pāni. In the south they are called Chitikans, a corruption of the Sanskrit chaitika, meaning one whose occupation relates to the funeral pile, and in the north Asthikkurichis (asthi, a bone), as they help the relations of the dead in the collection of the bones after cremation. The Mārāns are, further, in some places known as Potuvans,

as their services are engaged at the funerals of many castes.

Before the days of Sankarāchārya, the sole occupation of the Mārāns is said to have been beating the drum in Brāhmanical temples. When Sankarāchārya was refused assistance in the cremation of his dead mother by the Nambūtiri Brāhmans, he is believed to have sought in despair the help of one of these temple servants, with whose aid the corpse was divided into eight parts, and deposited in the pit. For undertaking this duty, which the Nambūtiris repudiated from a sense of offended religious feeling, the particular Mārān was thrown out of his caste by the general community, and a compromise had to be effected by the sage with the rest of the caste, who returned in a body on the day of purification along with the excommunicated man, and helped Sankarāchārya to bring to a close his mother's death ceremonies. In recognition of this timely help, Sankara is believed to have declared the Mārān to be an indispensable functionary at the death ceremonies of Nambūtiris and Ambalavāsis. It has even been suggested that the original form of Mārān was Mūrān, derived from mur (to chop off), in reference to the mànner in which the remains of Sankara's mother were disposed of.

The traditional occupation of the Mārāns is sounding or playing on the panchavadya or five musical instruments used in temples. These are the sankh or conch-shell, timila, chendu, kaimani, and maddalam. The conch, which is necessary in every Hindu temple, is loudly sounded in the early morning, primarily to wake the deity, and secondarily to rouse the villagers. Again, when the temple service commences, and when the nivedya or offering is carried, the music of the conch is heard from the northern side of the temple. On this

account, many Mārāns call themselves Vadakkupurattu, or belonging to the northern side. The asu and pāni are sounded by the highest dignitaries among them. The beating of the pāni is the accompaniment of expiatory offerings to the Saptamata, or seven mothers of Hindu religious writings, viz., Brāhmi, Mahēsvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrāni, and Chāmunda. Offerings are made to these divine mothers during the daily sribali procession, and in important temples also during the sribhutabali hours, and on the occasion of the utsavabali at the annual utsava of the temple. There are certain well-established rules prescribing the hymns to be recited, and the music to be played. So religiously have these rules to be observed during the utsavabali, that the priest who makes the offering, the Variyar who carries the light before him and the Mārāns who perform the music all have to fast, and to dress themselves in orthodox Brāhmanical fashion, with the uttariya or upper garment worn in the manner of the sacred thread. It is sincerely believed that the smallest violation of the rules would be visited with dire consequences to the delinquents before the next utsava ceremony.

In connection with the musical instrument called the timila, the following legend is current. There was a timila in the Sri Padmanābha temple made of kuruntotti, and there was a Mārān attached to the temple, who was such an expert musician that the priest was unable to adjust his hymn recitation to the music of the Mārān's drum, and was in consequence the recipient of the divine wrath. It was contrived to get a Brāhman youth to officiate as priest, and, as he could not recite the hymns in consonance with the sounds produced by the drum, a hungry spirit lifted him up from the ground to a height of ten feet. The father of the youth, hearing what had

occurred, hastened to the temple, and cut one of his fingers, the blood of which he offered to the spirit. The boy was then set free, and the old man, who was more than a match for the Mārān, began to recite the hymns. The spirits, raising the Mārān on high, sucked away his blood, and vanished. The particular timila has since this event never been used by any Mārān.

The higher classes of Mārāns claim six privileges, called pāno, kōni, tirumuttam, natumuttam, velichchor, and puchchor. Kōni means literally a ladder, and refers to the stretcher, made of bamboo and kūsa grass or straw, on which the corpses of high caste Hindus are laid. Tirumuttam is sweeping the temple courtyard, and natumuttam the erection of a small pandal (booth) in the courtyard of a Nambūtiri's house, where oblations are offered to the departed spirit on the tenth day after death. Velichchor, or sacrificial rice, is the right to retain the remains of the food offered to the manes, and puchchor the offering made to the deity, on whom the priest throws a few flowers as part of the consecration ceremony.

A large portion of the time of a Mārān is spent within the temple, and all through the night some watch over it. Many functions are attended to by them in the houses of Nambūtiris. Not only at the tonsure ceremony, and samavartana or closing of the Brāhmacharya stage, but also on the occasion of sacrificial rites, the Mārān acts as the barber. At the funeral ceremony, the preparation of the last bed, and handing the til (*Sesamum*) seeds, have to be done by him. The Chitikkans perform only the functions of shaving and attendance at funerals, and, though they may beat drums in temples, they are not privileged to touch the asu and pāni. At Vechūr there is a class of potters called Kūsa Mārān, who should

be distinguished from the Mārāns proper, with whom they have absolutely nothing in common.

Many families of the higher division of the Mārāns regard themselves as Ambalavāsis, though of the lowest type, and abstain from flesh and liquor. Some Mārāns are engaged in the practice of sorcery, while others are agriculturists. Drinking is a common vice, sanctioned by popular opinion owing to the notion that it is good for persons with overworked lungs.

In their ceremonies the Mārāns resemble the Nāyars, as they do also in their caste government and religious worship. The annaprasana, or first food-giving ceremony, is the only important one before marriage, and the child is taken to the temple, where it partakes of the consecrated food. The Nāyars, on the contrary, generally perform the ceremony at home. Purification by a Brāhman is necessary to release the Mārān from death pollution, which is not the case with the Nāyars. In Travancore, at any rate, the Nāyars are considered to be higher in the social scale than the Mārāns.

In connection with asu and pāni, which have been referred to in this note, I gather that, in Malabar, the instruments called maram (wood), timila, shanku, chengulam, and chenda, if played together, constitute pāni kottugu, or playing pāni. Asu and maram are the names of an instrument, which is included in pāni kottugu. Among the occasions when this is indispensable, are the dedication of the idol at a newly built temple, the udsavam pūram and Sriveli festivals, and the carrying of the tadambu, or shield-like structure, on which a miniature idol (vigraham) is borne outside the temple.

Marāsāri.—Marāsāri or Marapanikkan, meaning carpenter or worker in wood, is an occupational subdivision of Malayālam Kammālas.

Marātha.—Marāthas are found in every district of the Madras Presidency, but are, according to the latest census returns, most numerous in the following districts :—

South Canara	31,351
Salem	7,314
Tanjore	7,156
Bellary	6,311

It is recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, that "the term Marāthi denotes the various Marāthi non-Brāhman castes, who came to the south either as soldiers or camp followers in the armies of the Marāthi invaders ; but in South Canara, in which district the caste is most numerous, it appears to be the same as Ārē, a class of Marāthi cultivators. Of the total number of 65,961, as many as 40,871 have returned Marāthi as both caste and sub-division. The number of sub-divisions returned by the rest is no less than 305, of which the majority are the names of other castes. Some of these castes are purely Dravidian, and the names have evidently been used in their occupational sense. For example, we have Bōgam, Gāndla, Mangala, etc." Mr. H. A. Stuart writes further, in the South Canara Manual, that "Marāthi, as a caste name, is somewhat open to confusion, and it is probable that many people of various castes, who speak Marāthi, are shown as being of that caste. The true Marāthi caste is said to have come from Goa, and that place is the head-quarters. The caste is divided into twelve wargs or balis, which are exogamous sub-divisions. Caste disputes are settled by headmen called Hontagaru, and allegiance is paid to the head of the Sringēri math. The favourite deity is the goddess Mahādēvi. Brāhmans, usually Karādis, officiate at their ceremonies. Marriage is both infant

and adult. The dhāre form of marriage is used (*see* Bant). Widows may remarry, but they cannot marry again into the family of the deceased husband—a rule which is just the reverse of the Levirate. In some parts, however, the remarriage of widows is prohibited. A husband or a wife can divorce each other at will, and both parties may marry again. Marāthis are either farmers, labourers, or hunters. They eat fish and flesh (except that of cattle and animals generally regarded as unclean) and they use alcoholic liquors. They speak either the ordinary Marāthi or the Konkani dialect of it." The Marāthis of South Canara call themselves Ārē and Ārē Kshatri.

In the North Arcot Manual, Mr. Stuart records that the term Marāthi is "usually applied to the various Marātha Sūdra castes, which have come south. Their caste affix is always Rao. It is impossible to discover to what particular Sūdra division each belongs, for they do not seem to know, and take advantage of being away from their own country to assert that they are Kshatriyas—a claim which is ridiculed by other castes. In marriage they are particular to take a bride only from within the circle of their own family, so that an admixture of the original castes is thus avoided. Their language is Marāthi, but they speak Telugu or Tamil as well, and engage in many professions. Many are tailors.* Others enlist in the army, in the police, or as peons (orderlies or messengers), and some take to agriculture or trading."

Of the history of Marāthas in those districts in which they are most prevalent, an account will be found in the Manuals and Gazetteers.

* The Rangāris are Marātha dyers and tailors.

The last Marātha King of Tanjore, Mahārāja Sivāji, died in 1855. It is noted by Mr. M. J. Walhouse * that "an eye-witness has recorded the stately and solemn spectacle of his funeral, when, magnificently arranged, and loaded with the costliest jewels, his body, placed in an ivory palanquin, was borne by night through the torchlit streets of his royal city amid the wail of vast multitudes lamenting the last of their ruling race. The nearest descendant, a boy of twelve, was carried thrice round the pile, and at the last circuit a pot of water was dashed to pieces on the ground. The boy then lit the pile, and loud long-sustained lament of a nation filled the air as the flames rose." Upon the death of Sivāji, the Rāj became, under the decision of the Court of Directors, extinct. His private estate was placed under the charge of the Collector of the district. In addition to three wives whom he had already married, Sivāji, three years before his death, married in a body seventeen girls. In 1907, three of the Rānis were still living in the palace at Tanjore. It is recorded † by the Marchioness of Dufferin that, when the Viceroy visited the Tanjore palace in 1886 to speak with the Rānis, he was admitted behind the purdah. "The ladies had not expected him, and were not dressed out in their best, and no one could speak any intelligible language. However, a sort of chattering went on, and they made signs towards a chair, which, being covered with crimson cloth, Dufferin thought he was to sit down on. He turned and was just about to do so, when he thought he saw a slight movement, and he fancied there might be a little dog there, when two women pulled the cloth open, and there was the

* Ind. Ant., VII, 1878. † Our Viceregal Life in India, 1884-88.

principal Rāni—a little old woman who reached half way up the back of the chair, and whom the Viceroy had been within an act of squashing. He said it gave him such a turn!"

A classified index to the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Tanjore palace was published by Mr. A. C. Burnell in 1880. In the introduction thereto, he states that "the library was first brought to the notice of European scholars by H.S.H. Count Noer, Prince Frederic of Schleswig-Holstein, who brought an account of it to the late Professor Goldstücker. But its full importance was not known till I was deputed, in 1871, to examine it by the then Governor of Madras, Lord Napier and Ettrick. The manuscripts are the result of perhaps 300 years' collections; firstly, by the Nāyaks of Tanjore; secondly, after about 1675, by the Mahratha princes. Some of the palm-leaf manuscripts belong to the earlier period, but the greater part were collected in the last and present centuries. All the Nāgari Manuscripts belong to the Mahratha times, and a large number of these were collected at Benares by the Rāja Serfojee (Carabhoji) about fifty years ago."

In the Marātha Darbar Hall of the Tanjore palace are large pictures, of little artistic merit, of all the Marātha kings, and the palace also contains a fine statue of Sarabhōji by Chantrey. The small but splendid series of Marātha arms from this palace constitutes one of the most valuable assets of the Madras Museum. "The armoury," Mr. Walhouse writes,* "consisted of great heaps of old weapons of all conceivable descriptions, lying piled upon the floor of the Sangita Mahāl (music-hall), which had long been occupied by many

* *Loc. cit.*

tons of rusty arms and weapons, in confused heaps, coated and caked together with thick rust. Hundreds of swords, straight, curved and ripple-edged, many beautifully damascened and inlaid with hunting or battle scenes in gold; many broad blades with long inscriptions in Marāthi or Kanarese characters, and some so finely tempered as to bend and quiver like whalebone. There were long gauntlet-hilts, brass or steel, in endless devices, hilts inlaid with gold, and hilts and guards of the most tasteful and elaborate steel-work. There were long-bladed swords and executioners' swords, two-handed, thick-backed, and immensely heavy. Daggers, knives, and poniards by scores, of all imaginable and almost unimaginable shapes, double and triple-bladed; some with pistols or spring-blades concealed in their handles, and the hilts of many of the kuttars of the most beautiful and elaborate pierced steel-work, in endless devices, rivalling the best medieval European metal-work. There was a profusion of long narrow thin-bladed knives, mostly with bone or ivory handles very prettily carved, ending in parrot-heads and the like, or the whole handle forming a bird or monster, with legs and wings pressed close to the body, all exquisitely carved. The use of these seemed problematical; some said they were used to cut fruit, others that they had been poisoned and struck about the roofs and walls of the women's quarters, to serve the purpose of spikes or broken glass! A curious point was the extraordinary number of old European blades, often graven with letters and symbols of Christian meaning, attached to hilts and handles most distinctly Hindu, adorned with figures of gods and idolatrous emblems. There was an extraordinary number of long straight cut-and-thrust blades termed Phirangis, which Mr. Sinclair, in his interesting list of Dakhani

weapons,* says means the Portuguese, or else made in imitation of such imported swords. A kuttar, with a handsome steel hilt, disclosed the well-known name ANDREA FERARA (*sic*.). Sir Walter Elliot has informed me that, when a notorious freebooter was captured in the Southern Marâthâ country many years ago, his sword was found to be an 'Andrea Ferrara.' Mr. Sinclair adds that both Grant Duff and Meadows Taylor have mentioned that Râja Sivâji's favourite sword Bhavânî was a Genoa blade † . . . . Eventually the whole array (of arms) was removed to Trichinapalli and deposited in the Arsenal there, and, after a Committee of officers had sat upon the multifarious collection, and solemnly reported the ancient arms unfit for use in modern warfare, the Government, after selecting the best for the Museum, ordered the residue to be broken up and sold as old iron. This was in 1863."

It is recorded, in the Gazetteer of the Bellary district, that "in 1790 Lord Cornwallis, then Governor-General of India, entered into an alliance with the Marāthas and the Nizam to reduce Tipu to order, and it was agreed that whatever territories should be acquired by them from Tipu should be equally divided between them. Certain specified poligars, among whom were the chiefs of Bellary, Rayadrug and Harpanahalli, were, however, to be left in possession of their districts. Tipu was reduced to submission in 1792, and by the treaty of that year he ceded half his territories to the allies. ‡ Sandūr was allotted to the Marāthas, and a part of the Bellary

* Ind. Ant., II, 1874.

† The word Genoa occurs on several blades in the Madras Museum collection.

‡ The bas-relief of the statue of Lord Cornwallis in the Connemara Public Library, Madras, represents him receiving Tipu's two youthful sons as hostages.

district to the Nizam." The present Marātha chief of the little hill-locked Sandūr State is a minor, whose name and titles are Rāja Venkata Rao Rao Sahib Hindu Rao Ghōrpade Sēnāpati Māmalikat Madar. Of the eleven thousand inhabitants of the State, the various castes of Marāthas number over a thousand. "Three families of them are Brāhmans, who came to Sandūr as officials with Siddoji Rao when he took the State from the Jaramali poligar. Except for two short intervals, Siddoji's descendants have held the State ever since. The others are grouped into three local divisions, namely, Khāsgi, Kumbi, and Lēkāvali. The first of these consists of only some eight families, and constitutes the aristocracy of the State. Some of them came to Sandūr from the Marātha country with Siva Rao and other rulers of the State, and they take the chief seats at Darbars and on other public occasions, and are permitted to dine and intermarry with the Rāja's family. They wear the sacred thread of the Kshatriyas, belong to the orthodox Brāhmanical gōtras, have Brāhmans as their purōhits, observe many of the Brāhmanical ceremonies, burn their dead, forbid widow re-marriage, and keep their womankind gosha. On the other hand, they do not object to drinking alcohol or to smoking, and they eat meat, though not beef. Their family god is the same as that of the Rāja's family, namely, Martānda Manimallari, and they worship him in the temple in his honour which is in the Rāja's palace, and make pilgrimages to his shrine at Jejūri near Poona. [It is noted by Monier-Williams * that 'a deification, Khando-ba (also called Khande-Rao), was a personage who lived in the neighbourhood of the hill Jejūri, thirty miles from Poona.

* Brāhmanism and Hinduism.

He is probably a deification of some powerful Rāja or aboriginal chieftain, who made himself useful to the Brāhmans. He is now regarded as an incarnation of Siva in his form Mallāri. The legend is that the god Siva descended in this form to destroy a powerful demon named Mallāsura, who lived on the hill, and was a terror to the neighbourhood. Pārvatī descended at the same time to become Khando-bā's wife. His worship is very popular among the people of low caste in the Marātha country. Sheep are sacrificed at the principal temple on the Jejūri hill, and a bad custom prevails of dedicating young girls to the god's service. Khando-bā is sometimes represented with his wife on horseback, attended by a dog. A sect existed in Sankara's time, who worshipped Mallāri as lord of dogs.'] At the marriages of the Khāsgis, an unusual custom, called Vīra Pūja, or the worship of warriors, is observed. Before the ceremony, the men form themselves into two parties, each under a leader, and march to the banks of the Narihalla river, engaging in mock combat as they go. At the river an offering is made to Siva in his form as the warrior Martānda, and his blessing is invoked. The goddess Gangā is also worshipped, and then both parties march back, indulging on the way in more pretended fighting. The second division of the Marāthas, the Kunbis, are generally agriculturists, though some are servants to the first division. They cannot intermarry with the Khāsgis, or dine with them except in separate rows, and their womanfolk are not gosha; but they have Brāhmanical gōtras and Brāhman purōhits. Some of them use the Rāja's name of Ghōrpade, but this is only because they are servants in his household. The third division, the Lēkāvalis, are said to be the offspring of irregular unions among other Marāthas, and are many

of them servants in the Rāja's palace. Whence they are also called Manimakkalu. They all call themselves Ghōrpades, and members of the Rāja's (the Kansika) gōtra. They thus cannot intermarry among themselves, but occasionally their girls are married to Kunbis. Their women are in no way gōsha." *

The cranial type of the Marāthas is, as shown by the following table, like that of the Canarese, mesaticephalic or sub-brachycephalic :—

—	—	Cephalic Av.	Index Max.
Canarese	50 Holeyas	79·1	87·4
Marāthi	30 Rangāris	79·8	92·2
Canarese	50 Vakkaligas	81·7	93·8
Marāthi	30 Suka Sālēs	81·8	88·2
Marāthi	30 Sukun Sālēs	82·2	84·4

Maravan.—"The Maravans," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,† "are found chiefly in Madura and Tinnevelly, where they occupy the tracts bordering on the coast from Cape Comorin to the northern limits of the Rāmnād zemindari. The proprietors of that estate, and of the great Sivaganga zemindari, are both of this caste. The Maravars must have been one of the first of the Dravidian tribes that penetrated to the south of the peninsula, and, like the Kallans, they have been but little affected by Brāhmanical influence. There exists among them a picturesque tradition to the effect that, in consequence of their assisting Rāma in his war against the demon Rāvaṇa, that deity gratefully exclaimed in

* Gazetteer of the Bellary district. † Madras Census Report, 1891.

good Tamil Maravēn, or I will never forget, and that they have ever since been called Maravans. But, with more probability, the name may be connected with the word maram, which means killing, ferocity, bravery and the like, as pointing clearly to their unpleasant profession, that of robbing and slaying their neighbours. In former days they were a fierce and turbulent race, famous for their military prowess. At one time they temporarily held possession of the Pāndya kingdom, and, at a later date, their armies gave valuable assistance to Tirumala Nayakkan. They gave the British much trouble at the end of last (eighteenth) century and the beginning of this (nineteenth) century, but they are now much the same as other ryots (cultivators), though perhaps somewhat more bold and lawless. Agamudaiyan and Kallan are returned as sub-divisions by a comparatively large number of persons. Maravan is also found among the sub-divisions of Kallan, and there can be little doubt that there is a very close connection between Kallans, Maravans, and Agamudaiyans." This connection is dealt with in the article on the Kallans. But I may here quote the following legend relating thereto. "Once upon a time, Rishi Gautama left his house to go abroad on business. Dēvendra, taking advantage of his absence, debauched his wife, and three children were the result. When the Rishi returned, one of the three hid himself behind a door, and, as he thus acted like a thief, he was henceforward called Kallan. Another got up a tree, and was therefore called Maravan from maram, a tree, whilst the third brazened it out, and stood his ground, thus earning for himself the name of Ahamudeiyan, or the possessor of pride. This name was corrupted into Ahambadiyan."*

* Madras Review, 1899.

"Some say the word Maravan is derived from marani, sin; a Maravan being one who commits sin by killing living creatures without feeling pity, and without fear of god." *

The Maravans claim descent from Guha or Kuha, Rāma's boatman, who rowed him across to Ceylon. According to the legend, Rāma promised Guha that he would come back at a fixed time. When he failed to return, Guha made a fire, whereon to burn himself to death. Hanumān, however, prevented him from committing suicide, and assured him that Rāma would shortly return. This came to pass, and Rāma, on learning what Guha had done, called him Maravan, a brave or reckless fellow. According to another legend, the god Indra, having become enamoured of Ahalya, set out one night to visit her in the form of a crow, and, seating himself outside the dwelling of the Rishi her husband, cawed loudly. The Rishi, believing that it was dawn, went off to bathe, while Indra, assuming the form of her husband, went in to the woman, and satisfied his desire. When her husband reached the river, there were no signs of dawn, and he was much perturbed, but not for long, as his supernatural knowledge revealed to him how he had been beguiled, and he proceeded to curse Indra and his innocent wife. Indra was condemned to have a thousand female organs of generation all over his body, and the woman was turned into a stone. Indra repented, and the Rishi modified his disfigurement by arranging that, to the onlooker, he would seem to be clothed or covered with eyes, and the woman was allowed to resume her feminine form when Rāma, in the course of his wanderings, should tread on her. The

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* F. Fawcett. Journ. Anthrop. Inst., XXXIII, 1903.

result of Indra's escapade was a son, who was stowed away in a secret place (maravuidam). Hence his descendants are known as Maravan.*

The head of the Maravans is the Sētupati (lord of the bridge), or Rāja of Rāmnād. "The Sethupati line, or Marava dynasty of Rāmnād," the Rev. J. E. Tracy writes,† "claims great antiquity. According to popular legendary accounts, it had its rise in the time of the great Rāma himself, who is said to have appointed, on his victorious return from Lanka (Ceylon), seven guardians of the passage or bridge connecting Ceylon with the mainland . . . . Another supposition places the rise of the family in the second or third century B.C. It rests its case principally upon a statement in the Mahāwanso, according to which the last of the three Tamil invasions of Ceylon, which took place in the second or third century B.C., was under the leadership of seven chieftains, who are supposed, owing to the silence of the Pāndyan records on the subject of South Indian dealings with Ceylon, to have been neither Chēras, Chōlas, or Pāndyans, but mere local adventurers, whose territorial proximity and marauding ambition had tempted them to the undertaking . . . . Another supposition places the rise of the family in the eleventh or twelfth century A.D. There are two statements of this case, differing according to the source from which they come. According to the one, which has its source in South India, the rise of the family took place in or about 1059 A.D., when Rāja Rāja, the Chōla king, upon his invasion of Ceylon, appointed princes whom he knew to be loyal to himself, and who, according to some, had aided him in his conquest of all Pāndya, to act as guardians of the

* F. Fawcett, *loc. cit.* † Madras Journ. Lit. Science, 1890.

passage by which his armies must cross to and fro, and supplies be received from the mainland. According to the other statement, which has its source in Sinhalese records, the family took its rise from the appointment of Parākrama Bahu's General Lankapura, who, according to a very trustworthy Sinhalese epitome of the Mahāwanso, after conquering Pāndya, remained some time at Ramespuram, building a temple there, and, while on the island, struck kahapanas (coins similar to those of the Sinhalese series). Whichever of these statements we may accept, the facts seem to point to the rise of the family in the eleventh or twelfth century A.D., and inscriptions quoted from Dr. Burgess by Mr. Robert Sewell * show that grants were made by Sethupati princes in 1414, again in 1489, still again in 1500, and finally as late as 1540. These bring the line down to within two generations of the time when Muttu Krishnappa Nayakka is said, in 1604, to have found affairs sadly disordered in the Marava country, and to have re-established the old family in the person of Sadaiyaka Tēvar Udaiyar Sethupati. The coins of the Sethupatis divide themselves into an earlier and later series. The earlier series present specimens which are usually larger and better executed, and correspond in weight and appearance very nearly to the well-known coins of the Sinhalese series, together with which they are often found. 'These coins,' Rhys Davids writes, † 'are probably the very ones referred to as having been struck by Parākrama's General Lankapura.' The coins of the later series are very rude in device and execution. The one face shows only the Tamil legend of the word Sethupati, while the other side is taken up with various devices."

* Sketch of the Dynasties of South India.

† Numismata Orient. Ancient Coins and Measures of Ceylon.

A poet, in days of old, refers to "the wrathful and furious Maravar, whose curled beards resemble the twisted horns of the stag, the loud twang of whose powerful bowstrings, and the stirring sound of whose double-headed drums, compel even kings at the head of large armies to turn their back and fly." * The Maravans are further described as follows. "Of strong limbs and hardy frames, and fierce looking as tigers, wearing long and curled locks of hair, the blood-thirsty Maravans, armed with the bow bound with leather, ever ready to injure others, shoot their arrows at poor and defenceless travellers, from whom they can steal nothing, only to feast their eyes on the quivering limbs of their victims." † In a note on the Maravans of the Tinnevelly district, it is recorded ‡ that "to this class belonged most of the Poligars, or feudal chieftains, who disputed with the English the possession of Tinnevelly during the last, and first years of the present (nineteenth) century. As feudal chiefs and heads of a numerous class of the population, and one whose characteristics were eminently adapted for the roll of followers of a turbulent chieftain, bold, active, enterprising, cunning and capricious, this class constituted themselves, or were constituted by the peaceful cultivators, their protectors in time of bloodshed and rapine, when no central authority, capable of keeping the peace, existed. Hence arose the systems of Dēsha and Stalum Kāval, or the guard of a tract of country comprising a number of villages against open marauders in armed bands, and the guard of separate villages, their houses and crops, against secret theft. The feudal chief received a contribution from the area around his fort in

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* Kalith-thokai.

† Kanakasabhai Pillai. The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years ago. 1904.

‡ Manual of the Tinnevelly district, 1879.

consideration of protection afforded against armed invasion. The Maravars are chiefly the agricultural servants or sub-tenants of the wealthier ryots, under whom they cultivate, receiving a share of the crop. An increasing proportion of this caste are becoming the ryotwari owners of land by purchase from the original holders."

Though the Maravans, Mr. Francis writes,* "are usually cultivators, they are some of them the most expert cattle-lifters in the Presidency. In Madura they have a particularly ingenious method of removing cattle. The actual thief steals the bullocks at night, and drives them at a gallop for half a dozen miles, hands them over to a confederate, and then returns and establishes an *alibi*. The confederate takes them on another stage, and does the same. A third and a fourth man keep them moving all that night. The next day they are hidden and rested, and thereafter they are driven by easier stages to the hills north of Madura, where their horns are cut and their brands altered, to prevent them from being recognised. They are then often sold at the great Chittrai cattle fair in Madura town. In some papers read in G.O., No. 535, Judicial, dated 29th March 1899, it was shown that, though, according to the 1891 census, the Maravans formed only 10 per cent. of the population of the district of Tinnevelly, yet they had committed 70 per cent. of the dacoities which have occurred in that district in the previous five years. They have recently (1899) figured prominently in the anti-Shānār riots in the same district." (*See* Shānān.)

"The Maravans," Mr. F. S. Mullaly writes,† "furnish nearly the whole of the village police (kāvilgars, watchmen), robbers and thieves of the Tinnevelly district.

* Madras Census Report, 1901.

† Notes on Criminal Classes of the Madras Presidency.

Very often the thief and the watchman are one and the same individual. The Maravans of the present time, of course, retain only a shadow of the power which their ancestors wielded under the poligars, who commenced the kavil system. Still the Marava of to-day, as a member of a caste which is numerous and influential, as a man of superior physique and bold independent spirit, thief and robber, village policeman and detective combined—is an immense power in the land."

It is noted, in the Madras Police Report, 1903, that "a large section of the population in Tinnevelly—the Maravans—are criminal by predilection and training. Mr. Longden's efforts have been directed to the suppression of a bad old custom, by which the police were in the habit of engaging the help of the Maravans themselves in the detection of crime. The natural result was a mass of false evidence and false charges, and, worst of all, a police indebted to the Maravan, who was certain to have his *quid pro quo*. This method being discountenanced, and the station-house officer being deprived of the aid of his tuppans (men who provide a clue), the former has found himself very much at sea, and, until sounder methods can be inculcated, will fail to show successful results. Still, even a failure to detect is better than a police in the hands of the Maravans." Further information concerning tuppukuli, or clue hire, will be found in the note on Kallans.

From a very interesting note on the Maravans of the Tinnevelly district, the following extract is taken.* "On the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, Maravars are paid blackmail to keep their hands from picking and stealing, and to make restitution for any thefts that may

* Tinnevelly, being an account of the district, the people, and the missions. Mission Field, 1897

possibly take place, notwithstanding the vigilance of the watchmen. (A suit has been known to be instituted, in a Munsiff's Court, for failure to make restitution for theft after receipt of the kudikāval money.) As a matter of fact, no robberies on a large scale can possibly take place without the knowledge, connivance, or actual co-operation of the Kavalgars. People living in country places, remote from towns, are entirely at the mercy of the Maravars, and every householder or occupier of a mud hut, which is dignified by being called a house, must pay the Maravars half a fanam, which is equal to one anna eight pies, yearly. Those who own cattle, and there are few who do not, must pay one fanam a year. At the time of the harvest, it is the custom in Southern India for an enemy to go and reap his antagonist's crops as they are growing in the fields. He does this to bring matters to a climax, and to get the right side of his enemy, so that he may be forced to come to terms, reasonable or otherwise. Possession is nine points of the law. On occasions such as these, which are frequent, the advantage of the employment of Kavalgars can readily be understood. The Maravars are often true to their salt, though sometimes their services can be obtained by the highest bidder. The plan of keeping kaval, or going the rounds like a policeman on duty, is, for a village of, say, a hundred Maravars, to divide into ten sections. Each section takes a particular duty, and they are paid by the people living within their range. If a robbery takes place, and the value of the property does not exceed ten rupees, then this section of ten men will each subscribe one rupee, and pay up ten rupees. If, however, the property lost exceeds the sum of ten rupees, then all the ten sections of Maravars, the hundred men, will join together, and make restitution for the robbery. How

they are able to do this, and to recoup themselves, can be imagined. Various attempts for many years have been made to put a stop to this system of kudi-kaval. At one time the village (Nunguneri) of the chief Maravar was burnt down, and for many years the police have been on their track, and numerous convictions are constantly taking place. Out of 150,000 Maravars in the whole district, 10,000 are professional thieves, and of these 4,000 have been convicted, and are living at the present time. The question arises whether some plan could not be devised to make honest men of these rogues. It has been suggested that their occupation as watchmen should be recognised by Government, and that they should be enlisted as subordinate officials, just as some of them are now employed as Talayaris and Vettiyans . . . . The villages of the Maravars exist side by side with the other castes, and, as boys and girls, all the different classes grow up together, so that there is a bond of sympathy and regard between them all. The Maravans, therefore, are not regarded as marauding thieves by the other classes. Their position in the community as Kavalgars is recognised, and no one actually fears them. From time immemorial it has been the mamool (custom) to pay them certain dues, and, although illegal, who in India is prepared to act contrary to custom? The small sum paid annually by the villagers is insignificant, and no one considers it a hardship to pay it, when he knows that his goods are in safety; and, if the Maravars did not steal, there are plenty of other roving castes (*e.g.*, the Kuluvars, Kuravars, and Kambalatars) who would, so that, on the whole, ordinary unsophisticated natives, who dwell in the country side, rather like the Maravar than otherwise. When, however, these watchmen undertake torchlight

dacoities, and attack travellers on the high-road, then they are no better than the professional thieves of other countries, and they deserve as little consideration. It must be borne in mind that, while robbery is the hereditary occupation of the Maravars, there are thousands of them who lead strictly honest, upright lives as husbandmen, and who receive no benefit whatever from the kudi-kaval system. Some of the most noted and earnest Native Christians have been, and still are, men and women of this caste, and the reason seems to be that they never do things by halves. If they are murderers and robbers, nothing daunts them, and, on the other hand, if they are honest men, they are the salt of the earth." I am informed that, when a Maravan takes food in the house of a stranger, he will sometimes take a pinch of earth, and put it on the food before he commences his meal. This act frees him from the obligation not to injure the family which has entertained him.

In a note entitled Marava jāti vernanam,* from the Mackenzie Manuscripts, it is recorded that "there are seven sub-divisions in the tribe of the Maravas, respectively denominated Sembunāttu, Agattha, Oru-nāttu, Upukatti, and Kurichikattu. Among these sub-divisions, that of the Sembunāttu Maravas is the principal one." In the Madras Census Report, 1891, the following are returned as the most important sub-divisions :—Agamudaiyan, Kallan, Kārana, Kondaikatti, Kottāni, Sembanāttu, and Vannikutti. Among the Sembanāttus (or Sembanādus), the following septs or khilais have been recorded :—

Marikka.	Thanicha.
Piccha.	Karuputhra.
Tondamān.	Katrā.
Sītrama.	

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, IV, 1836.

"The Kondayamkottai Maravars," Mr. F. Fawcett writes,* "are divided into six sub-tribes, or, as they call them, trees. Each tree, or kothu, is divided into three khilais or branches. These I call septs. Those of the khilais belonging to the same tree or kothu are never allowed to intermarry. A man or woman must marry with one of a khilai belonging to another tree than his own, his or her own being that of his or her mother, and not of the father. But marriage is not permissible between those of any two trees or kothus: there are some restrictions. For instance, a branch of betel vine or leaves may marry with a branch of cocoanut, but not with areca nuts or dates. I am not positive what all the restrictions are, but restrictions of some kind, by which marriage between persons of all trees may not be made indiscriminately, certainly exist. The names of the trees or kothus and of the khilais or branches, as given to me from the Maraver Pādel, a book considered to be authoritative, are these—

Tree.	Kothu.	Khilai.
Milaku	Pepper vine ...	Viramudithanginan. Sedhar. Semanda.
Vettile	Betel vine	Agastyar. Maruvidu. Alakhiya Pandiyan.
Thennang ...	Cocoanut	Vaniyan. Vettuvan. Nataivendar.
Komukham ...	Areca nut	Kelnambhi. Anbutran. Gautaman.
Ichang	Dates	Sadachi. Sangaran. Pichipillai.
Panang	Palmyra	Akhili. Lokhamurti. Jambhuvar.

* Journ. Anthrop. Inst., XXXIII, 1903.

"Unfortunately I am unable to trace out the meanings of all these khilais. Agastya and Gautamar are, of course, sages of old. Viramudithanginan seems to mean a king's crown-bearer. Alakhiya Pandiyan seems to be one of the old Pandiyan kings of Madura (alakhiya means beautiful). Akhili is perhaps intended to mean the wife of Gautama, Lokamurti, the one being of the world, and Jambhuvar, a monkey king with a bear's face, who lived long, long ago. The common rule regulating marriages among Brāhmans, and indeed people of almost every caste in Southern India, is that the proper husband for the girl is her mother's brother or his son. But this is not so among the Kondayamkottai Maravars. A girl can never marry her mother's brother, because they are of the same khilai. On the other hand, the children of a brother and sister may marry, and should do so, if this can be arranged, as, though the brother and sister are of the same khilai, their children are not, because the children of the brother belong perforce to that of their mother, who is of a different khilai. It very often happens that a man marries into his father's khilai; indeed there seems to be some idea that he should do so if possible. The children of brothers may not marry with each other, although they are of different khilais, for two brothers may not marry into the same khilai. One of the first things to be done in connection with a marriage is that the female relations of the bridegroom must go and examine the intended bride, to test her physical suitability. She should not, as it was explained to me, have a flat foot; the calf of her leg should be slender, not so thick as the thigh; the skin on the throat should not form more than two wrinkles; the hair over the temple should grow

crossways. The last is very important." A curl on the forehead resembling the head of a snake is of evil omen.

In one form of the marriage rites as carried out by the Maravans, the bridegroom's party proceed, on an auspicious day which has been fixed beforehand, to the home of the bride, taking with them five cocoanuts, five bunches of plantains, five pieces of turmeric, betel, and flowers, and the tāli strung on a thread dyed with turmeric. At the auspicious hour, the bride is seated within the house on a plank, facing east. The bridegroom's sister removes the string of black beads from her neck, and ties the tāli thereon. While this is being done, the conch-shell is blown, and women indulge in what Mr. Fawcett describes as a shrill kind of keening (kulavi idal). The bride is taken to the house of the bridegroom, where they sit side by side on a plank, and the ceremony of warding off the evil eye is performed. Further, milk is poured by people with crossed hands over the heads of the couple. A feast is held, in which meat takes a prominent part. A Maravan, who was asked to describe the marriage ceremony, replied that it consists in killing a sheep or fowl, and the bringing of the bride by the bridegroom's sister to her brother's house after the tāli has been tied. The Kondaikatti Maravans, in some places, substitute for the usual golden tāli a token representing "the head of Indra fastened to a bunch of human hair, or silken strings representing his hair." *

In another form of the marriage ceremony, the father of the bridegroom goes to the bride's house,

* F. Fawcett, *loc. cit.*

accompanied by his relations, with the following articles in a box made of plaited palmyra leaves :—

5 bundles of betel.	7 lumps of jaggery (crude sugar).
21 measures of rice.	21 pieces of turmeric.
7 cocoanuts.	Flowers, sandal paste, etc.
70 plantains.	

At the bride's house, these presents are touched by those assembled there, and the box is handed over to the bride's father. On the wedding day (which is four days afterwards), pongal (cooked rice) is offered to the house god early in the morning. Later in the day, the bridegroom is taken in a palanquin to the house of the bride. Betel is presented to him by her father or brother. The bride generally remains within the house till the time for tying the tāli has arrived. The maternal uncle then blindfolds her with his hand, lifts her up, and carries her to the bridegroom. Four women stand round the contracting couple, and pass round a dish containing a broken cocoanut and a cake three times. The bride and bridegroom then spit into the dish, and the females set up their shrill keening. The maternal uncles join their hands together, and, on receiving the assent of those present, the bridegroom's sister ties the tāli on the bride's neck. The tāli consists of a ring attached to a black silk thread. After marriage, the "silk tāli" is, for every day purposes, replaced by golden beads strung on a string, and the tāli used at the wedding is often borrowed for the occasion. The tāli having been tied, the pair are blessed, and, in some places, their knees, shoulders, heads, and backs are touched with a betel leaf dipped in milk, and blessed with the words "May the pair be prosperous, giving rise to leaves like a banyan tree, roots like the thurvi (*Cynodon Dactylon*) grass, and like the bamboo." Of

the thurvi grass it is said in the Atharwana Vēda "May this grass, which rose from the water of life, which has a hundred roots and a hundred stems, efface a hundred of my sins, and prolong my existence on earth for a hundred years."

Still further variants of the marriage ceremonial are described by Mr. Fawcett, in one of which "the Brāhman priest (purōhit) hands the tāli to the bridegroom's sister, who in turn hands it to the bridegroom, who ties a knot in it. The sister then ties two more knots in it, and puts it round the bride's neck. After this has been done, and while the pair are still seated, the Brāhman ties together the little fingers of the right hands of the pair, which are interlocked, with a silken thread. The pair then rise, walk thrice round the marriage seat (manavanai), and enter the house, where they sit, and the bridegroom receives present from the bride's father. The fingers are then untied. While undergoing the ceremony, the bridegroom wears a thread smeared with turmeric tied round the right wrist. It is called kappu."

In the manuscript already quoted,* it is noted that "should it so happen, either in the case of wealthy rulers of districts or of poorer common people, that any impediment arises to prevent the complete celebration of the marriage with all attendant ceremonies according to the sacred books and customs of the tribe, then the tāli only is sent, and the female is brought to the house of her husband. At a subsequent period, even after two or three children have been born, the husband sends the usual summons to a marriage of areca nut and betel leaf; and, when the relatives are assembled, the bride

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, IV, 1836.

and bridegroom are publicly seated in state under the marriage pandal; the want of completeness in the former contract is made up; and, all needful ceremonies being gone through, they perform the public procession through the streets of the town, when they break the cocoanut in the presence of Vignēsvara (Ganēsa), and, according to the means possessed by the parties, the celebration of the marriage is concluded in one day, or prolonged to two, three or four days. The tāli, being tied on, has the name of katu tāli, and the name of the last ceremony is called the removal of the former deficiency. If it so happen that, after the first ceremony, the second be not performed, then the children of such an alliance are lightly regarded among the Maravas. Should the husband die during the continuance of the first relation, and before the second ceremony be performed, then the body of the man, and also the woman are placed upon the same seat, and the ceremonies of the second marriage, according to the customs of the tribe, being gone through, the tāli is taken off; the woman is considered to be a widow, and can marry with some other man." It is further recorded * of the Orunāttu Maravans that "the elder or younger sister of the bridegroom goes to the house of the bride, and, to the sound of the conch-shell, ties on the tāli; and, early on the following morning, brings her to the house of the bridegroom. After some time, occasionally three or four years, when there are indications of offspring, in the fourth or fifth month, the relatives of the pair assemble, and perform the ceremony of removing the deficiency; placing the man and his wife on a seat in public, and having the sacrifice by fire and other matters conducted by the Prōhitan (or Brāhman);

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, IV, 1836.

after which the relatives sprinkle seshai rice (or rice beaten out without any application of water) over the heads of the pair. The relatives are feasted and otherwise hospitably entertained; and these in return bestow donations on the pair, from one fanam to one pagoda. The marriage is then finished. Sometimes, when money for expenses is wanting, this wedding ceremony is postponed till after the birth of two or three children. If the first husband dies, another marriage is customary. Should it so happen that the husband, after the tying on of the tāli in the first instance, dislikes the object of his former choice, then the people of their tribe are assembled; she is conducted back to her mother's house; sheep, oxen, eating-plate, with brass cup, jewels, ornaments, and whatever else she may have brought with her from her mother's house, are returned; and the tāli, which was put on, is broken off and taken away. If the wife dislikes the husband, then the money he paid, the expenses which he incurred in the wedding, the tāli which he caused to be bound on her, are restored to him, and the woman, taking whatsoever she brought with her, returns to her mother's house, and marries again at her pleasure."

It is recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, that "a special custom obtaining among the Marava zemindars of Tinnevelly is mentioned by the Registrar of that district. It is the celebration of marriage by means of a proxy for the bridegroom in the shape of a stick, which is sent by the bridegroom, and is set up in the marriage booth in his place. The tāli is tied by some one representative of the bridegroom, and the marriage ceremony then becomes complete . . . . Widow re-marriage is freely allowed and practiced, except in the Sembunāttu sub-division." "A widow,"

Mr. Fawcett writes, "may marry her deceased husband's elder brother, but not a younger brother. If she does not like him, she may marry some one else."

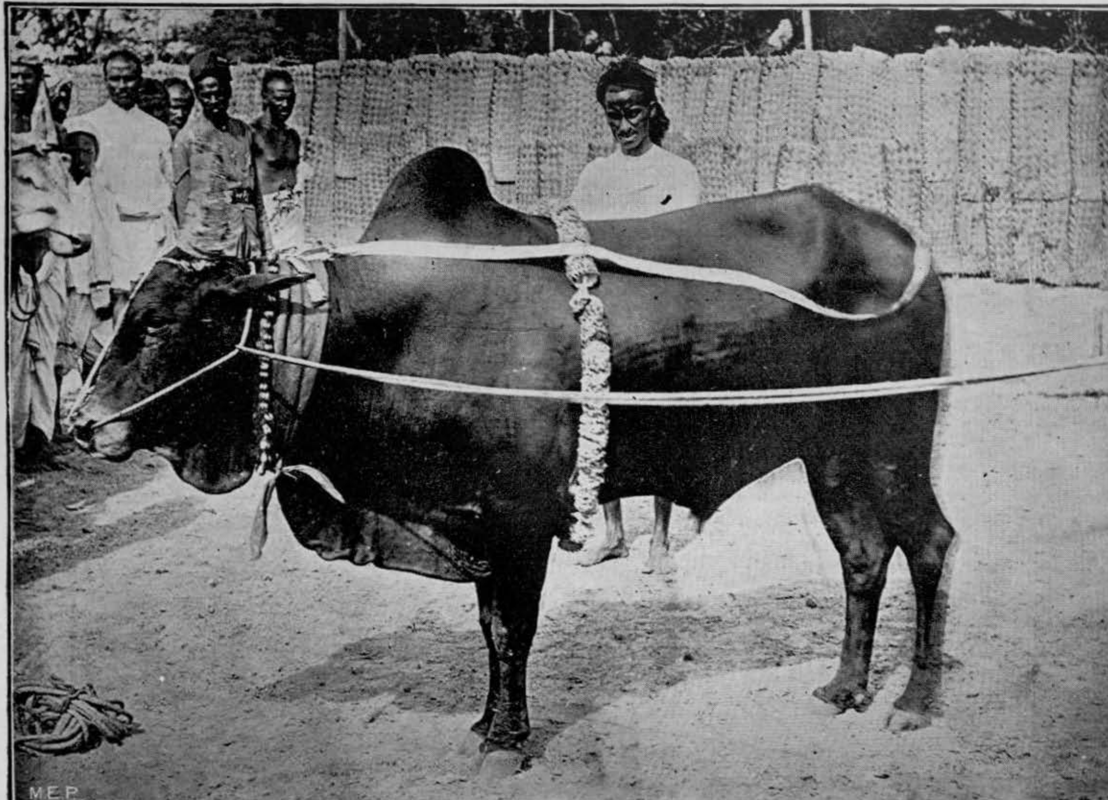
When a girl reaches puberty, news of the event is conveyed by a washerman. On the sixteenth day she comes out of seclusion, bathes, and returns home. At the threshold, her future husband's sister is standing, and averts the evil eye by waving betel leaves, plantains, cocoanuts, cooked flour paste (puttu), a vessel filled with water, and an iron measure containing rice with a style (ambu) stuck in it. The style is removed by the girl's prospective sister-in-law, who beats her with it as she enters the house. A feast is held at the expense of the girl's maternal uncle, who brings a goat, and ties it to a pole at her house.

Both burial and cremation are practiced by the Maravans. The Sembunāttu Maravans of Rāmnād regard the Agamudaiyans as their servants, and the water, with which the corpse is washed, is brought by them. Further, it is an Agamudaiyan, and not the son of the deceased, who carries the fire-pot to the burial-ground. The corpse is carried thither on a bier or palanquin. The grave is dug by an Āndi, never by a Pallan or Paraiyan. Salt, powdered brick, and sacred ashes are placed on the floor thereof, and the corpse is placed in it in a sitting posture. The Kondaiyamkottai Maravans of Rāmnād, who are stone and brick masons, burn their dead, and, on their way to the burning-ground, the bearers of the corpse walk over cloths spread on the ground. On the second or third day, lingams are made out of the ashes, or of mud from the grave if the corpse has been buried. To these, as well as to the soul of the deceased, and to the crows, offerings are made. On the sixteenth day,

nine kinds of seed-grain are placed over the grave, or the spot where the corpse was burnt. A Pandāram sets up five kalasams (brass vessels), and does pūja (worship). The son of the deceased, who officiated as chief mourner, goes to a Pillayar (Ganēsa) shrine, carrying on his head a pot containing a lighted lamp made of flour. As he draws near the god, a screen is stretched in front thereof. He then takes a few steps backwards, the screen is removed, and he worships the god. He then retires, walking backwards. The flour is distributed among those present. Presents of new cloths are made to the sons and daughters of the deceased. In his account of the Kondaiyamkottai Maravans, Mr. Fawcett gives the following account of the funeral rites. "Sandals having been fastened on the feet, the corpse is carried in a recumbent position, legs first, to the place of cremation. A little rice is placed in the mouth, and the relatives put a little money into a small vessel which is kept beside the chest. The karma karta (chief mourner) walks thrice round the corpse, carrying an earthen vessel filled with water, in which two or three holes are pierced. He allows some water to fall on the corpse, and breaks the pot near the head, which lies to the south. No Brāhman attends this part of the ceremony. When he has broken the pot, the karma karta must not see the corpse again; he goes away at once, and is completely shaved. The barber takes the cash which has been collected, and lights the pyre. When he returns to the house, the karma karta prostrates himself before a lighted lamp; he partakes of no food, except a little grain and boiled pulse and water, boiled with coarse palm sugar and ginger. Next day he goes to the place of cremation, picks up such calcined bones as he finds, and places them in a basket, so that he may some day throw them in

water which is considered to be sacred. On the eleventh or twelfth day, some grain is sown in two new earthen vessels which have been broken, and there is continued weeping around these. On the sixteenth day, the young plants, which have sprouted, are removed, and put into water, weeping going on all the while; and, after this has been done, the relatives bathe and enjoy a festive meal, after which the karma karta is seated on a white cloth, and is presented with a new cloth and some money by his father-in-law and other relatives who are present. On the seventeenth day takes place the punyaga-vachanam or purification, at which the Brāhman priest presides, and the karma karta takes an oil bath. The wood of the pīpal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) is never used for purposes of cremation."

Concerning the death ceremonies in the Trichinopoly district, Mr. F. R. Hemingway writes as follows. "Before the corpse is removed, the chief mourner and his wife take two balls of cow-dung, in which the barber has mixed various kinds of grain, and stick them on to the wall of the house. These are thrown into water on the eighth day. The ceremonial is called pattam kat-tugiradu, or investing with the title, and indicates the succession to the dead man's estate. A rocket is fired when the corpse is taken out of the house. On the sixth day, a pandal (booth) of nāval (*Eugenia Jambolana*) leaves is prepared, and offerings are made in it to the manes of the ancestors of the family. It is removed on the eighth day, and the chief mourner puts a turban on, and merry-making and dances are indulged in. There are ordinarily no karumāntaram ceremonies, but they are sometimes performed on the sixteenth day, a Brāh-man being called in. On the return home from these ceremonies, each member of the party has to dip his toe



JALLIKATTU BULL.

into a mortar full of cow-dung water, and the last man has to knock it down."

Among some Kondaiyamkottai Maravans, a ceremony called palaya karmāndhiram, or old death ceremony, is performed. Some months after the death of one who has died an unnatural death, the skull is exhumed, and placed beneath a pandal (booth) in an open space near the village. Libations of toddy are indulged in, and the villagers dance wildly round the head. The ceremony lasts over three days, and the final death ceremonies are then performed.

For the following account of the jellikattu or bull-baiting, which is practiced by the Maravans, I am indebted to a note by Mr. J. H. Nelson.* "This," he writes, "is a game worthy of a bold and free people, and it is to be regretted that certain Collectors (District Magistrates) should have discouraged it under the idea that it was somewhat dangerous. The jellikattu is conducted in the following manner. On a certain day in the year, large crowds of people, chiefly males, assemble together in the morning in some extensive open space, the dry bed of a river perhaps, or of a tank (pond), and many of them may be seen leading ploughing bullocks, of which the sleek bodies and rather wicked eyes afford clear evidence of the extra diet they have received for some days in anticipation of the great event. The owners of these animals soon begin to brag of their strength and speed, and to challenge all and any to catch and hold them; and in a short time one of the best beasts is selected to open the day's proceedings. A new cloth is made fast round his horns, to be the prize of his captor, and he is then led

* Manual of the Madura district.

out into the midst of the arena by his owner, and there left to himself surrounded by a throng of shouting and excited strangers. Unaccustomed to this sort of treatment, and excited by the gestures of those who have undertaken to catch him, the bullock usually lowers his head at once, and charges wildly into the midst of the crowd, who nimbly run off on either side to make way for him. His speed being much greater than that of the men, he soon overtakes one of his enemies and makes at him to toss him savagely. Upon this the man drops on the sand like a stone, and the bullock, instead of goring him, leaps over his body, and rushes after another. The second man drops in his turn, and is passed like the first; and, after repeating this operation several times, the beast either succeeds in breaking the ring, and galloping off to his village, charging every person he meets on the way, or is at last caught and held by the most vigorous of his pursuers. Strange as it may seem, the bullocks never by any chance toss or gore any one who throws himself down on their approach; and the only danger arises from their accidentally reaching unseen and unheard some one who remains standing. After the first two or three animals have been let loose one after the other, two or three, or even half a dozen are let loose at a time, and the scene quickly becomes most exciting. The crowd sways violently to and fro in various directions in frantic efforts to escape being knocked over; the air is filled with shouts, screams, and laughter; and the bullocks thunder over the plain as fiercely as if blood and slaughter were their sole occupation. In this way perhaps two or three hundred animals are run in the course of a day, and, when all go home towards evening, a few cuts and bruises, borne with the utmost cheerfulness,

are the only results of an amusement which requires great courage and agility on the part of the competitors for the prizes—that is for the cloths and other things tied to the bullocks' horns—and not a little on the part of the mere bystanders. The only time I saw this sport (from a place of safety) I was highly delighted with the entertainment, and no accident occurred to mar my pleasure. One man indeed was slightly wounded in the buttock, but he was quite able to walk, and seemed to be as happy as his friends."

A further account of the jallikat or jellicut is given in the Gazetteer of the Madura district. "The word jallikattu literally means tying of ornaments. On a day fixed and advertised by beat of drums at the adjacent weekly markets, a number of cattle, to the horns of which cloths and handkerchiefs have been tied, are loosed one after the other, in quick succession, from a large pen or other enclosure, amid a furious tom-tomming and loud shouts from the crowd of assembled spectators. The animals have first to run the gauntlet down a long lane formed of country carts, and then gallop off wildly in every direction. The game consists in endeavouring to capture the cloths tied to their horns. To do this requires fleetness of foot and considerable pluck, and those who are successful are the heroes of the hour. Cuts and bruises are the reward of those who are less skilful, and now and again some of the excited cattle charge into the on-lookers, and send a few of them flying. The sport has been prohibited on more than one occasion. But, seeing that no one need run any risks unless he chooses, existing official opinion inclines to the view that it is a pity to discourage a manly amusement which is not really more dangerous than football, steeple-chasing, or fox-hunting. The keenness

of the more virile sections of the community, especially the Kallans (*q.v.*), in this game is extraordinary, and, in many villages, cattle are bred and reared specially for it. The best jallikats are to be seen in the Kallan country in Tirumangalam, and next come those in Mēlur and Madura taluks."

"Boomerangs," Dr. G. Oppert writes,* "are used by the Maravans and Kallans when hunting deer. The Madras Museum collection contains three (two ivory, one wooden) from the Tanjore armoury. In the arsenal of the Pudukōttai Rāja a stock of wooden boomerangs is always kept. Their name in Tamil is valai tade (bent stick)." To Mr. R. Bruce Foote, I am indebted for the following note on the use of the boomerang in the Madura district. "A very favourite weapon of the Madura country is a kind of curved throwing-stick, having a general likeness to the boomerang of the Australian aborigines. I have in my collection two of these Maravar weapons obtained from near Sivaganga. The larger measures $24\frac{1}{8}''$ along the outer curve, and the chord of the arc $17\frac{5}{8}''$. At the handle end is a rather ovate knob $2\frac{1}{4}''$ long and $1\frac{1}{4}''$ in its maximum thickness. The thinnest and smallest part of the weapon is just beyond the knob, and measures $\frac{11}{16}''$ in diameter by $1\frac{1}{8}''$ in width. From that point onwards its width increases very gradually to the distal end, where it measures $2\frac{3}{8}''$ across and is squarely truncated. The lateral diameter is greatest three or four inches before the truncated end, where it measures $1''$. My second specimen is a little smaller than the above, and is also rather less curved. Both are made of hard heavy wood, dark reddish brown in colour as seen through the

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, XXV.

varnish covering the surface. The wood is said to be tamarind root. The workmanship is rather rude. I had an opportunity of seeing these boomerangs in use near Sivaganga in March, 1883. In the morning I came across many parties, small and large, of men and big boys who were out hare-hunting with a few dogs. The parties straggled over the ground, which was sparsely covered with low scrub jungle. And, whenever an unlucky hare started out near to the hunters, it was greeted with a volley of the boomerangs, so strongly and dexterously thrown that poor puss had little chance of escape. I saw several knocked out of time. On making enquiries as to these hunting parties, I was told that they were in observance of a semi-religious duty, in which every Maravar male, not unfitted by age or ill-health, is bound to participate on a particular day in the year. Whether a dexterous Maravar thrower could make his weapon return to him I could not find out. Certainly in none of the throws observed by me was any tendency to a return perceptible. But for simple straight shots these boomerangs answer admirably."

The Maravans bear Saivite sectarian marks, but also worship various minor deities, among whom are included Kāli, Karuppan, Muthu Karuppan, Periya Karuppan, Mathurai Vīran, Aiyanar, and Mūnuswāmi.

The lobes of the ears of Marava females are very elongated as the result of boring and gradual dilatation during childhood. Mr. (now Sir) F. A. Nicholson, who was some years ago stationed at Ramnād, tells me that the young Maravan princesses used to come and play in his garden, and, as they ran races, hung on to their ears, lest the heavy ornaments should rend asunder the filamentous ear lobes.

It was recorded, in 1902, that a young Maravan, who was a member of the family of the Zemindar of Chokampatti, was the first non-Christian Maravan to pass the B.A. degree examination at the Madras University.

The general title of the Maravans is Tēvan (god), but some style themselves Talaivan (chief), Sērvaikkāran (captain), Karaiyālan (ruler of the coast), or Rāyar-vamsam (Rāja's clan).

Mārayan.—A synonym of Mārān.

Māri.—Māri or Mārimanisaru is a sub-division of Holeya.

Māriyan.—Said to be a sub-division of Kōlayān.

Markandēya.—A gōtra of Padma Sālē and Sēniyan (Dēvānga), named after the rishi or sage Markandēya, who was remarkable for his austerities and great age, and is also known as Dīrghāyus (the long-lived). Some Dēvāngas and the Sālāpus claim him as their ancestor.

Marri (*Ficus bengalensis*).—An exogamous sept of Māla and Mutrācha. Marri-gunta (pond near a fig tree) occurs as an exogamous sept of Yānādi.

Marumakkathāyam.—The Malayālam name for the law of inheritance through the female line.

Marvāri.—A territorial name, meaning a native of Marwar. At times of census, Marvāri has been returned as a caste of Jains, *i.e.*, Marvāris, who are Jains by religion. The Marvāris are enterprising traders, who have settled in various parts of Southern India, and are, in the city of Madras, money-lenders.

Māsādika.—A synonym for Nādava Bant.

Māsila (māsi, dirt).—An exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Masthān.—A Muhammadan title, meaning a saint, returned at times of census.

Māstiga.—The Māstigas are described by the Rev. J. Cain * as mendicants and bards, who beg from Gollas, Mālas, and Mādigas. I am informed that they are also known as Māla Māstigas, as they are supposed to be illegitimate descendants of the Mālas, and usually beg from them. When engaged in begging, they perform various contortionist and acrobatic feats.

Matam (monastery, or religious institution).—An exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Mātanga.—Mātanga or Mātangi is a synonym of Mādiga. The Mādigas sometimes call themselves Mātangi Makkalu, or children of Mātangi, who is their favourite goddess. Mātangi is further the name of certain dedicated prostitutes, who are respected by the Mādiga community.

Matavan.—Recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as a name for the Pulikkapanikkan sub-division of Nāyar.

Matsya (fish).—A sept of Dōmb.

Mattiya.—The Mattiyas are summed up as follows in the Madras Census Report, 1901. "In Vizagapatam these are hill cultivators from the Central Provinces, who are stated in one account to be a sub-division of the Gonds. Some of them wear the sacred thread, because the privilege was conferred upon their families by former Rājas of Malkanagiri, where they reside. They are said to eat with Rōnas, drink with Porojas, but smoke only with their own people. The name is said to denote workers in mud (matti), and in Ganjam they are apparently earth-workers and labourers. In the Census Report, 1871, it is noted that the Matiyās are 'altogether superior to the Kois and to the

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* Ind. Ant., VIII, 1879.

Parjās (Porojas). They say they sprang from the soil, and go so far as to point out a hole, out of which their ancestor came. They talk Uriyā, and farm their lands well.'"

For the following note, I am indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. The caste is divided into at least four septs, named Bhāg (tiger), Nāg (cobra), Chēli (goat), and Kochchimo (tortoise). A man may claim his paternal aunt's daughter in marriage. Girls are, as a rule, married after puberty. When a match is contemplated, the would-be husband presents a pot of liquor to the girl's parents. If this is accepted, a further present of liquor, rice, and a pair of cloths, is made later on. The liquor is distributed among the villagers, who, by accepting it, indicate their consent to the transfer of the girl to the man. A procession, with Dōmbs acting as musicians, is formed, and the girl is taken to the bridegroom's village. A pandal (booth) has been erected in front of the bridegroom's house, which the contracting couple enter on the following morning. Their hands are joined together by the presiding Dēsāri, they bathe in turmeric water, and new cloths are given to them. Wearing these, they enter the house, the bridegroom leading the bride. Their relations then exhort them to be constant to each other, and behave well towards them. A feast follows, and the night is spent in dancing and drinking. Next day, the bride's parents are sent away with a present of a pair of cows or bulls as jholla tonka. The remarriage of widows is allowed, and a younger brother usually marries the widow of his elder brother. Divorce is permitted, and, when a husband separates from his wife, he gives her a new cloth and a bullock as compensation. A divorced woman may remarry.

By the Mattiyas, and other Oriya castes, the ghorojavai (house son-in-law) custom is practiced. According to this custom, the poorer folk, in search of a wife, work, according to a contract, for their future father-in-law for a specified time, at the expiration of which they set up a separate establishment with his daughter. To begin married life with, presents are made to the couple by the father-in-law.

The dead are burnt, and the spot where cremation takes place is marked by setting up in the ground a bamboo pole, to which one of the dead man's rags is attached. The domestic pots, which were used during his last illness, are broken there. Death pollution is observed for eight days. On the ninth day, the ashes, mixed with water, are cleared up, and milk is poured over the spot. The ashes are sometimes buried in a square hole, which is dug to a depth of about three feet, and filled in. Over it a small hut-like structure is raised. A few of these sepulchral monuments may be seen on the south side of the Pangām stream on the Jeypore-Malkangiri road. The personal names of the Mattiyas are often taken from the day of the week on which they are born.

Māvilān.—Described, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a small tribe of shikāris (hunters) and herbalists, who follow makkathāyam (inheritance from father to son), and speak corrupt Tulu. Tulumār (native of the Tulu country), and Chingattān (lion-hearted people) were returned as sub-divisions. "The name," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,* "is said to be derived from māvilāvu, a medicinal herb. I think, however, the real derivation must be sought in Tulu or Canarese, as it seems to be a Canarese caste. These people are found only in the

* Madras Census Report, 1891.

Chirakkal tāluk of Malabar. Their present occupation is basket-making. Succession is from father to son, but among some it is also said to be in the female line."

It is recorded, in the Gazetteer of Malabar, that the Māvilōns are "divided into Tulu Mavilōns and Eda Mavilōns, and sub-divided into thirty illams. They are employed as mahouts (drivers of elephants), and collect honey and other forest produce. Their headmen are called Chingam (simham, lion), and their huts Māpura."

Mayalōtilu (rascal).—Mayalōtilu or Manjulōtilu is said by the Rev. J. Cain to be a name given by the hill Kōyis to the Kōyis who live near the Godāvari river.

Mayan.—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, as a synonym of Kammālan. The Kamsali goldsmiths claim descent from Maya.

Mēda, Mēdara, Mēdarlu, or Mēdarakāran.—The Mēdaras are workers in bamboo in the Telugu, Canarese, Oriya and Tamil countries, making sieves, baskets, cradles, mats, fans, boxes, umbrellas, and tatties (screens). Occasionally they receive orders for waste-paper baskets, coffins for Native Christian children, or cages for pigeons and parrots. In former days they made basket-caps for sepoys. They are said to cut the bamboos in the forest on dark nights, in the belief that they would be damaged if cut at any other time. They do not, like the Korachas, make articles from the leaf of the date-palm (*Phœnix*).

They believe that they came from Mahēndrāchāla mountain, the mountain of Indra, and the following legend is current among them. Dakshudu, the father-in-law of Siva, went to invite his son-in-law to a devotional sacrifice, which he was about to perform. Siva was in a state of meditation, and did not visibly return the obeisance which Dakshudu made by raising his hands to his forehead. Dakshudu became angry,

and told his people not to receive Siva or his wife, or show them any mark of respect. Parvati, Siva's wife, went with her son Ganapati, against her husband's order, to the sacrifice, and received no sign of recognition. Thereat she shed tears, and the earth opened, and she disappeared. She was again born of Himavant (Himālayas), and Siva, telling her who she was, remarried her. Siva, in reply to her enquiries, told her that she could avoid a further separation from him if she performed a religious vow, and gave cakes to Brāhmans in a chata, or winnowing basket. She accordingly made a basket of gold, which was not efficacious, because, as Siva explained to her, it was not plaited, as bamboo baskets are. Taking his serpent, Siva turned it into a bamboo. He ordered Ganapati, and others, to become men, and gave them his trisula and ghada to work with on bamboo, from which they plaited a basket for the completion of Parvati's vow. Ganapati and the Gānas remained on the Mahēndrāchāla mountain, and married Gandarva women, who bore children to them. Eventually they were ordered by Siva to return, and, as they could not take their wives and families with them, they told them to earn their livelihood by plaiting bamboo articles. Hence they were called Mahēndrulu or Mēdarlu. According to another legend,* Parvati once wanted to perform the ceremony called gaurinōmu, and, wanting a winnow, was at a loss to know how to secure one. She asked Siva to produce a man who could make one, and he ordered his riding-ox Vrishaban to produce such a person by chewing. Vrishaban complied, and the ancestor of the Mēdaras, being informed of the wish of the goddess, took the snake which formed Siva's necklace,

* Manual of the North Arcot district.

and, going to a hill, planted its head in the ground. A bamboo at once sprang up on the spot, which, after returning the snake to its owner, the man used for making a winnow. The snake-like root of the bamboo is regarded as a proof of the truth of the story.

As among many other castes, opprobrious names are given to children. For example, a boy, whose elder brother has died, may be called Pentayya (dung-heap). As a symbol of his being a dung-heap child, the infant, as soon as it is born, is placed on a leaf-platter. Other names are Thavvayya, or boy bought for bran, and Pakiru, mendicant. In a case where a male child had been ill for some months, a woman, under the influence of the deity, announced that he was possessed by the goddess Ankamma. The boy accordingly had the name of the goddess conferred on him.

The following are some of the gōtras and exogamous septs of the Mēdaras :—

(*a*) *Gōtras.*

Hanumanta (monkey-god).
Puli (tiger).
Thāgenīlu (drinking water).
Avisa (*Sesbania grandiflora*).
Rēla (*Ficus*).
Sēshai (snake ?).
Bombadai (a fish).
Vināyaka (Ganēsa).
Kāsi (Benares).
Moduga (*Butea frondosa*).
Kovila (koel or cuckoo).

(*b*) *Exogamous septs.*

Pilli (cat).
Parvatham (mountain).
Putta (ant-hill).
Konda (mountain).
Javādi (civet-cat).
Nandikattu (bull's mouth).
Kandikattu (dhāl soup).
Kottakunda (new pot).
Pooreti (a bird).
Kallūri (stone village).
Nuvvulu (gingelly).
Senagapapu (Bengal gram).
Tsanda (subscription).
Nīla (blue).
Sirigiri (a hill).
Kanigiri (a hill).
Pōthu (male).
Nāginīdu (snake).
Kola (ear of corn).

A man most frequently marries his maternal uncle's daughter, less frequently the daughter of his paternal aunt. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister is regarded with special favour. Marriage with two living sisters, if one of them is suffering from disease, is common.

In a note on the Mēdaras of the Vizagapatam district, Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao writes that girls are married before or after puberty. A Brāhman officiates at the marriage ceremonies. Widows are allowed to remarry once, and the sathamānam (marriage badge) is tied by the new husband on the neck of the bride, who has, as in the Gūdala caste, to sit near a mortar.

Formerly all the Mēdaras were Saivites, but many are at the present day Vaishnavites, and even the Vaishnavites worship Siva. Every family has some special person or persons whom they worship, for example, Vīrullu, or boys who have died unmarried. A silver image is made, and kept in a basket. It is taken out on festive occasions, as before a marriage in a family, and offerings of milk and rice gruel are made to it. Bāla Pērantālu, or girls who have died before marriage, and Pērantālu, or women who have died before their husbands, are worshipped with fruits, turmeric, rice, cocoanuts, etc.

Some of the Saivites bury their dead in a sitting posture, while others resort to cremation. All the Vaishnavites burn the dead, and, like the Saivites, throw the ashes into a river. The place of burning or burial is not as a rule marked by any stone or mound. But, if the family can afford it, a tulsi fort is built, and the tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) planted therein. In the Vizagapatam district, death pollution is said to last for three days, during which the caste occupation is not carried out. On the third day, a fowl is killed, and food cooked. It

is taken to the spot where the corpse was burnt, on which a portion is thrown, and the remainder eaten.

The potency of charms in warding off evil spirits is believed in. For example, a figure of Hanumān the monkey-god, on a thin plate of gold, with cabalistic letters inscribed on it, is worn on the neck. And, on eclipse days, the root of the madar or arka plant (*Calotropis gigantea*), enclosed in a gold casket, is worn on the neck of females, and on the waist or arms of males. Some members of this, as of other castes, may be seen with cicatrices on the forehead, chest, back, or neck. These are the scars resulting from branding during infancy with lighted turmeric or cheroot, to cure infantile convulsions, resulting, it is believed, from inhaling tobacco smoke in small, ill-ventilated rooms.

Various legends are current in connection with tribal heroes. One Mēdara Chennayya is said to have fed some thousands of people with a potful of rice. His grandson, Mēdara Thodayya, used to do basket-making, and bathed three times daily. A Brāhman, afflicted with leprosy, lost a calf. In searching for it, he fell into a ditch filled with water, in which the Mēdara had bathed, and was cured. One Mēdara Kēthayya and his wife were very poor, but charitable. In order to test him, the god Iswara made grains of gold appear in large quantities in the hollow of a bamboo, which he cut. He avoided the bamboos as being full of vermin, and useless. At some distance, he found an ant-hill with a bamboo growing in it, and, knowing that bamboos growing on such a hill will not be attacked by vermin, cut it. In so doing, he cut off the head of a Rishi, who was doing penance. Detecting the crime of which he had been guilty, he cried "Siva, Siva." His wife, who was miles away, heard him, and, knowing that he must be in some

trouble, went to the spot. He asked her how he was to expiate his sin, and she replied. "You have taken a life, and must give one in return." He thereon prepared to commit suicide, but his wife, taking the knife from him, was about to sacrifice herself when Iswara appeared, restored the Rishi to life, and took Mēdara Kēthayya and his wife to heaven.

As among many other castes, the sthambamuhurtham (putting up the post) ceremony is performed when the building of a new house is commenced, and the deeparathana (lamp-worship) before it is occupied. In every settlement there is a Kulapedda, or hereditary caste headman, who has, among other things, the power of inflicting fines, sentencing to excommunication, and inflicting punishments for adultery, eating with members of lower castes, etc. Excommunication is a real punishment, as the culprit is not allowed to take bamboo, or mess with his former castemen. In the Kistna and Godāvari districts, serious disputes, which the local panchāyat (council) cannot decide, are referred to the headman at Masulipatam, who at present is a native doctor. There are no trials by ordeal. The usual form of oath is "Where ten are, there God is. In his presence I say."

When a girl reaches puberty, she has to sit in a room on five fresh palmyra palm leaves, bathes in turmeric water, and may not eat salt. If there is "leg's presentation" at childbirth, the infant's maternal uncle should not hear the infant cry until the shanti ceremony has been performed. A Brāhman recites some mantrams, and the reflection of the infant's face is first seen by the uncle from the surface of oil in a plate. Widow remarriage is permitted. A widow can be recognised by her not wearing the tāli, gāzulu (glass bangles), and mettu (silver ring on the second toe).

The lowest castes with which the Mēdaras will eat are, they say, Kōmatis and Velamas. Some say that they will eat with Sātānis.

In the Coorg country, the Mēdaras are said to subsist by umbrella-making. They are the drummers at Coorg festivals, and it is their privilege to receive annually at harvest-time from each Coorg house of their district as much reaped paddy as they can bind up with a rope twelve cubits in length. They dress like the Coorgs, but in poorer style.*

It is recorded by Bishop Whitehead † that, "in Mercāra tāluk, in Ippanivolavade, and in Kadikeri in Halerinad, the villagers sacrifice a kōna or male buffalo. Tied to a tree in a gloomy grove near the temple, the beast is killed by a Mēda, who cuts off its head with a large knife, but no Coorgs are present at the time. The blood is spilled on a stone under a tree, and the flesh eaten by Mēdas."

At the Census, 1901, Gauriga was returned as a sub-caste by some Mēdaras. The better classes are taking to call themselves Balijas, and affix the title Chetti to their names. The Godagula workers in split bamboo sometimes call themselves Oddē (Oriya) Mēdara.‡

Mēda (raised mound).—An exogamous sept of Padma Sālē.

Medam (fight).—An exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Mehtar.—A few Mehtars are returned, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a Central Provinces caste of scavengers. "This name," Yule and Burnell write,§ "is usual in Bengal, especially for the domestic

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* G. Richter. Manual of Coorg.

† Madras Museum Bull., V, 3, 1907.

‡ For portions of this article I am indebted to a note by Mr. J. D. Samuel.

§ Hobson-Jobson.

servant of this class. The word is Pers., comp. mihtar (Lat. major), a great personage, a prince, and has been applied to the class in question in irony, or rather in consolation. But the name has so completely adhered in this application, that all sense of either irony or consolation has perished. Mehtar is a sweeper, and nought else. His wife is the Matranee. It is not unusual to hear two Mehtars hailing each other as Mahārāj!"

Meikāval (body-guard of the god).—A name for Pandārams.

Mēkala (goats).—Recorded as an exogamous sept of Bōya, Chenchu, Golla, Kamma, Kāpu, Togata, and Yānādi. Nerigi Mēkala (a kind of goat) is a further sept of Yānādi.

Mēkhri.—A sub-division of Navāyat Muhammadans.

Mēlāchchēri.—A class of Muhammadans in the Laccadive islands (*see* Māppilla).

Mēladava.—Dancing-girls in South Canara.

Mēlakkāran.—Concerning the Mēlakkārans, Mr. F. R. Hemingway writes as follows.* "The name means musicians, and, as far as Tanjore is concerned, is applied to two absolutely distinct castes, the Tamil and Telugu Mēlakkārans (of whom the latter are barber musicians). These two will not eat in each other's houses, and their views about dining with other castes are similar. They say they would mess (in a separate room) in a Vellālan's house, and would dine with a Kallan, but it is doubtful whether any but the lower non-Brāhman communities would eat with them. In other respects the two castes are quite different. The former speak Tamil, and, in most of their customs,

* Gazetteer of the Tanjore district.

resemble generally the Vellālans and other higher Tamil castes, while the latter speak Telugu, and follow domestic practices similar to those of the Telugu Brāhmans. Both are musicians. The Telugus practice only the musician's art or periyamēlam (band composed of clarionet or nāgasaram, pipe, drum, and cymbals), having nothing to do with dancing or dancing-girls, to whom the chinnamēlam or nautch music is appropriate. The Tamil caste provides, or has adopted all the dancing-girls in the district. The daughters of these women are generally brought up to their mother's profession, but the daughters of the men of the community rarely nowadays become dancing-girls, but are ordinarily married to members of the caste. The Tamil Mēlakkārans perform both the periyamēlam and the nautch music. The latter consists of vocal music performed by a chorus of both sexes to the accompaniment of the pipe and cymbals. The class who perform it are called Nattuvans, and they are the instructors of the dancing-women. The periyamēlam always finds a place at weddings, but the nautch is a luxury. Nowadays the better musicians hold themselves aloof from the dancing-women. Both castes have a high opinion of their own social standing. Indeed the Tamil section say they are really Kallans, Vellālans, Agamudaiyans, and so on, and that their profession is merely an accident." The Vairāvi, or temple servant of Nāttukōttai Chettis, must be a Mēlakkāran.

Mellikallu.—Under the name Mellikallu or Mallekalu, seventy-six individuals are returned, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as "hill cultivators in Pedakōta village of Vīravalli tāluk of the Vizagapatam Agency, who are reported to constitute a caste by themselves. They pollute by touch, have their own priests, and eat pork but not beef."

Mēlnādu.—Mēlnādu, or Mēlnātar, meaning western country, is the name of a territorial sub-division of Kallan and Shānān.

Mēlu Sakkare.—A name, meaning western Sakkare, by which Upparas in Mysore style themselves. They claim descent from a mythical individual, named Sagara, who dug the Bay of Bengal. Some Upparas explain that they work in salt, which is more essential than sugar, and that Mēl Sakkara means superior sugar.

Mēman.—More than three hundred members of this Muhammadan class of Bombay traders were returned at the Madras Census, 1901. It is recorded, in the Bombay Gazetteer, that many Cutch Mēmans are prospering as traders in Kurrachee, Bombay, the Malabar coast, Hyderabad, Madras, Calcutta, and Zanzibar.

Menasu (pepper or chillies).—An exogamous sept of Kuruba, and gōtra of Kurni.

Mēnōkki (overseer).—Mēnōkki and Mēnōki have been returned, in the Travancore and Cochin Census Reports, as a sub-division of Nāyars, who are employed as accountants in temples. The name is derived from mēl, above, nōkki, from nōkkunnu to look after.

Mēnōn.—By Wigram,* Mēnōn is defined as "a title originally conferred by the Zamorin on his agents and writers. It is now used by all classes of Nāyars. In Malabar, the village karnam (accountant) is called Mēnōn." In the Travancore Census Report, 1901, Mēnōn is said to be "a contraction of Mēnavan (a superior person). The title was conferred upon several families by the Rājā of Cochin, and corresponds to

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* Malabar Law and Custom.

Pillai down south. As soon as a person was made a Mēnōn, he was presented with an ōla (palmyra leaf for writing on) and an iron style, as symbolical of the office he was expected to fill, *i.e.*, of an accountant. Even now, in British Malabar, each amsham or revenue village has a writer or accountant, who is called Mēnōn." Mr. F. Fawcett writes * that "to those of the sub-clan attached to the Zamorin who were sufficiently capable to earn it, he gave the titular honour Mēnōn, to be used as an affix to the name. The title Mēnōn is in general hereditary, but, be it remarked, many who now use it are not entitled to do so. Properly speaking, only those whose investiture by the Zamorin or some other recognized chief is undisputed, and their descendants (in the female line) may use it. A man known to me was invested with the title Mēnōn in 1895 by the Karimpuzha chief, who, in the presence of a large assembly, said thrice 'From this day forward I confer on Krishnan Nāyar the title of Krishna Mēnōn.' Nowadays be it said, the title Mēnōn is used by Nāyars of clans other than the Akattu Charna." Indian undergraduates at the English Universities, with names such as Krishna Mēnōn, Rāman Mēnōn, Rāmunni Mēnōn, are known as Mr. Mēnōn. In the same way, Marātha students are called by their titular name Mr. Rao.

Mēra.—A sub-division of Holeya.

Meria.—At the Madras Census, 1901, twenty-five individuals returned themselves as Meria or Merakāya. They were descendants of persons who were reserved for human (Meriah) sacrifice, but rescued by Government officials in the middle of the last century.

* Madras Museum Bull. III, 3, 1901.

Mēsta.—A name taken by some Chaptēgāras (carpenters) in South Canara.

Mēstri.—A title of Semmāns and other Tamil classes. The Pānān tailors are said to be also called Mēstris. Concerning the word mēstri, or maistry, Yule and Burnell write as follows.* "This word, a corruption of the Portuguese Mestre, has spread into the vernaculars all over India, and is in constant Anglo-Indian use. Properly a foreman, a master-worker. In W. and S. India maistry, as used in the household, generally means the cook or the tailor."

Mettu Kamsali.—A synonym of Ojali blacksmith. Mettu means shoes or sandals.

Mhāllo.—A name for Konkani barbers.

Midathala (locust).—An exogamous sept of Bōya and Mādiga.

Middala or Meddala (storeyed house).—An exogamous sept of Padma Sālē.

Midichi (locust).—A gōtra of Kurni.

Mīla.—The Mīlas are a fishing caste in Ganjam and Vizagapatam, for the following note on whom I am indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. The name Mīlavāndlu, by which they are commonly known, means fishermen. They also call themselves Ōdavāndlu, because they go out to sea, fishing from boats (ōda). When they become wealthy, they style themselves Ōda Balijas. The caste is divided into numerous exogamous septs, among which are dhōni (boat), and tōta (garden). The custom of mēnarikam, according to which a man should marry his maternal uncle's daughter, is in force, and a man may also marry his sister's daughter. Girls are generally married after puberty. Gold jewellery is

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* Hobson-Jobson.

presented in lieu of money as the bride-price (vōli). On the occasion of a marriage, half a dozen males and females go to the house of the bride, where they are entertained at a feast. She is conducted to the home of the bridegroom. A plank is placed at the entrance to the house, on which the bride and bridegroom take their seats. After they have bathed, new cloths are presented to them, and the old ones given to the barber. They then sit once more on the plank, and the caste headman, called the Ejaman, takes up the sathamānam (marriage badge), which is passed round among those assembled. It is finally tied by the bridegroom on the bride's neck. The remarriage of widows is recognised. Each village has an Ejaman, who, in addition to officiating at weddings, presides over council meetings, collects fines, etc. The caste goddess is Pōlamma, to whom animal sacrifices are offered, and in whose honour an annual festival is held. The expenses thereof are met by public subscription and private donations. The dead are burnt, and a Sātāni officiates at funerals. Death pollution is not observed. On the twelfth day after death, the pedda rōzu (big day) ceremony is performed. The caste titles are Anna and Ayya.

Milaku (pepper: *Piper nigrum*).—A tree or kothu of Kondaiyamkotti Maravans.

Milikhān.—A class of Muhammadan pilots and sailors in the Laccadive islands (*see* Māppilla).

Mīnalavāru (fish people).—An exogamous sept of Bēdar or Bōya. Mīn (fish) Palli occurs as a name for Pallis who have settled in the Telugu country, and adopted fishing as their profession.

Minchu (metal toe-ring).—An exogamous sept of Kuruba.

Mini (leather rope).—A gōtra of Kurni.

Minpidi (fish-catching).—A sub-division of Pānan.

Mirapakāya (*Capsicum frutescens*).—An exogamous sept of Bōya.

Mirigani.—A sub-division of Dōmb.

Miriyāla (pepper).—An exogamous sept of Balija.

Mir Shikari.—A synonym of Kurivikkāran.

Misāla (whiskers).—An exogamous sept of Bōya.

Mise (moustache).—An exogamous sept of Kuruba.

Mochi.—*See* Mucchi.

Modikāran.—The name sometimes applied to Nōkkan mendicants, who dabble in jugglery. Modi is a trial of magical powers between two persons, in which the hiding of money is the essential thing.

Mōduga (*Butea frondosa*).—A gōtra of Mēdara.

Mogēr.—The Mogērs are the Tulu-speaking fishermen of the South Canara district, who, for the most part, follow the aliya santāna law of inheritance (in the female line), though some who are settled in the northern part of the district speak Canarese, and follow the makkala santāna law (inheritance from father to son).

The Mogērs are largely engaged in sea-fishing, and are also employed in the Government fish-curing yards. On the occasion of an inspection of one of these yards at Mangalore, my eye caught sight of the saw of a saw-fish (*Pristis*) hanging on the wall of the office. Enquiry elicited that it was used as a "threatening instrument" in the yard. The ticket-holders were Māppillas and Mogērs. I was informed that some of the Mogērs used the hated thattu vala or āchi vala (tapping net), in using which the sides of the boats are beaten with sticks, to drive the fish into the net. Those who object to this method of fishing maintain that the noise made with the sticks frightens away the shoals of mackerel and sardines.

A few years ago, the nets were cut to pieces, and thrown into the sea, as a protest against their employment. A free fight ensued, with the result that nineteen individuals were sentenced to a fine of fifty rupees, and three months' imprisonment. In connection with my inspections of fisheries, the following quaint official report was submitted. "The Mogers about the town of Udipi are bound to supply the revenue and magisterial establishment of the town early in the morning every day a number of fishes strung to a piece of rope. The custom was originated by a Tahsildar (Native revenue officer) about twenty years ago, when the Tahsildar wielded the powers of the magistrate and the revenue officer, and was more than a tyrant, if he so liked—when rich and poor would tremble at the name of an unscrupulous Tahsildar. The Tahsildar is divested of his magisterial powers, and to the law-abiding and punctual is not more harmful than the dormouse. But the custom continues, and the official, who, of all men, can afford to pay for what he eats, enjoys the privileges akin to those of the time of Louis XIV's court, and the poor fisherman has to toil by night to supply the rich official's table with a delicious dish about gratis." A curious custom at Cannanore in Malabar may be incidentally referred to. Writing in 1873, Dr. Francis Day states * that "at Cannanore, the Rajah's cat appears to be exercising a deleterious influence on one branch at least of the fishing, viz., that for sharks. It appears that, in olden times, one fish daily was taken from each boat as a perquisite for the Rajah's cat, or the poocha meen (cat fish) collection. The cats apparently have not augmented so much as the fishing boats, so this has been commuted into a

* Sea Fisheries of India.

money payment of two pies a day on each successful boat. In addition to this, the Rajah annually levies a tax of Rs. 2–4–0 on every boat. Half of the sharks' fins are also claimed by the Rajah's poocha meen contractor."

Writing concerning the Mogērs, Buchanan * states that "these fishermen are called Mogayer, and are a caste of Tulava origin. They resemble the Mucuas (Mukkuvans) of Malayala, but the one caste will have no communion with the other. The Mogayer are boatmen, fishermen, porters, and palanquin-bearers. They pretend to be Sudras of a pure descent, and assume a superiority over the Halepecas (Halēpaiks), one of the most common castes of cultivators in Tulava; but they acknowledge themselves greatly inferior to the Bunts." Some Mogērs have abandoned their hereditary profession of fishing, and taken to agriculture, oil-pressing, and playing on musical instruments. Some are still employed as palanquin-bearers. The oil-pressers call themselves Gānigas, the musicians Sappaligas, and the palanquin-bearers Bōvis. These are all occupational names. Some Bestha immigrants from Mysore have settled in the Pattūr tāluk, and are also known as Bōvis. The word Bōvi is a form of the Telugu Bōyi (bearer).

The Mogērs manufacture the caps made from the spathe of the areca palm, which are worn by Koragas and Holeyas.

The settlements of the Mogēr fishing community are called pattana, *e.g.*, Odorottu pattana, Manampādē pattana. For this reason, Pattanadava is sometimes given as a synonym for the caste name. The Tamil fishermen of the City of Madras are, in like manner,

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* Journey from Madras through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, 1807.

called Pattanavan, because they live in pattanams or maritime villages.

Like other Tulu castes, the Mogērs worship bhūthas (devils). The principal bhūtha of the fishing community is Bobbariya, in whose honour the kōla festival is held periodically. Every settlement, or group of settlements, has a Bobbariya bhūthasthana (devil shrine). The Matti Brāhmans, who, according to local tradition, are Mogērs raised to the rank of Brāhmans by one Vathirāja Swāmi, a Sanyāsi, also have a Bobbariya bhūthasthana in the village of Matti. The Mogērs who have ceased to be fishermen, and dwell in land, worship the bhūthas Panjurli and Baikadthi. There is a caste priest, called Mangala pūjāri, whose head-quarters are at Bannekuduru near Barkūr. Every family has to pay eight annas annually to the priest, to enable him to maintain the temple dedicated to Ammanoru or Mastiamma at Bannekuduru. According to some, Mastiamma is Māri, the goddess of small-pox, while others say that she is the same as Mohini, a female devil, who possesses men, and kills them.

For every settlement, there must be at least two Gurikāras (headmen), and, in some settlements, there are as many as four. All the Gurikāras wear, as an emblem of their office, a gold bracelet on the left wrist. Some wear, in addition, a bracelet presented by the members of the caste for some signal service. The office of headman is hereditary, and follows the aliya santāna law of succession (in the female line).

The ordinary Tulu barber (Kelasi) does not shave the Mogērs, who have their own caste barber, called Mēlantavam, who is entitled to receive a definite share of a catch of fish. The Konkani barbers (Mholla) do not object to shave Mogērs, and, in some places

where Mhollas are not available, the Billava barber is called in.

Like other Tulu castes, the Mogērs have exogamous septs, or balis, of which the following are examples :—

Āne, elephant.	Honne, *Pterocarpus Marsupium.*
Bali, a fish.	Shetti, a fish.
Dēva, god.	Tolana, wolf.
Dyava, tortoise.	

The marriage ceremonial of the Mogērs conforms to the customary Tulu type. A betrothal ceremony is gone through, and the sirdochi, or bride-price, varying from six to eight rupees, paid. The marriage rites last over two days. On the first day, the bride is seated on a plank or cot, and five women throw rice over her head, and retire. The bridegroom and his party come to the home of the bride, and are accommodated at her house, or elsewhere. On the following day, the contracting couple are seated together, and the bride's father, or the Gurikāra, pours the dhāre water over their united hands. It is customary to place a cocoanut on a heap of rice, with some betel leaves and areca nuts at the side thereof. The dhāre water (milk and water) is poured thrice over the cocoanut. Then all those assembled throw rice over the heads of the bride and bridegroom, and make presents of money. Divorce can be easily effected, after information of the intention has been given to the Gurikāra. In the Udipi tāluk, a man who wishes to divorce his wife goes to a certain tree with two or three men, and makes three cuts in the trunk with a bill-hook. This is called barahakodu, and is apparently observed by other castes. The Mogērs largely adopt girls in preference to boys, and they need not be of the same sept as the adopter.

On the seventh day after the birth of a child a Madivali (washerwoman) ties a waist-thread on it, and

gives it a name. This name is usually dropped after a time, and another name substituted for it.

The dead are either buried or cremated. If the corpse is burnt, the ashes are thrown into a tank (pond) or river on the third or fifth day. The final death ceremonies (bojja or sāvu) are performed on the seventh, ninth, eleventh, or thirteenth day, with details similar to those of the Billavas. Like other Tulu castes, some Mogērs perform a propitiatory ceremony on the fortieth day.

The ordinary caste title of the Mogērs is Marakālēru, and Gurikāra that of members of the families to which the headmen belong. In the Kundapūr tāluk, the title Naicker is preferred to Marakālēru.

The cephalic index of the Mogērs is, as shown by the following table, slightly less than that of the Tulu Bants and Billavas :—

—	Av.	Max.	Min.	No. of times index 80 or over.
50 Billavas	80·1	91·5	71·	28
40 Bants	78·	91·2	70·8	13
40 Mogērs	77·1	84·9	71·8	9

Mogili (*Pandanus fascicularis*).—An exogamous sept of Kāpu and Yerukala.

Mogotho.—A sub-division of Gaudo, the members of which are considered inferior because they eat fowls.

Mohiro (peacock).—An exogamous sept or gōtra of Bhondāri and Gaudo.

Mōksham (heaven).—An exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Moktessor or Mukhtesar.—*See* Stānika.

Mola (hare).—An exogamous sept of Gangadikāra Holeya and Gangadikāra Vakkaliga.

Molaya Dēvan.—A title of Kallan and Nōkkan.

Mōliko.—A title of Doluva and Kondra.

Monathinni.—The name, meaning those who eat the vermin of the earth, of a sub-division of Valaiyan.

Mondi.—For the following note I am indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. Mondi, Landa, Kalladi-siddhan (*q.v.*), and Kalladi-mangam, are different names for one and the same class of mendicants. The first two names denote a troublesome fellow, and the last two one who beats himself with a stone. The Mondis speak Tamil, and correspond to the Bandas of the Telugu country, banda meaning an obstinate person or tricksy knave. [The name Banda is sometimes explained as meaning stone, in reference to these mendicants carrying about a stone, and threatening to beat out their brains, if alms are not forthcoming.] They are as a rule tall, robust individuals, who go about all but naked, with a jingling chain tied to the right wrist, their hair long and matted, a knife in the hand, and a big stone on the left shoulder. When engaged in begging, they cut the skin of the thighs with the knife, lie down and beat their chests with the stone, vomit, roll in the dust or mud, and throw dirt at those who will not contribute alms. In a note on the Mondis or Bandas,* Mr. H. A. Stuart writes that these beggars "lay no claim to a religious character. Though regarded as Sūdras, it is difficult to think them such, as they are black and filthy in their appearance, and disgusting in their habits. Happily their numbers are few. They wander about singing, or rather warbling, for they utter no articulate words, and, if money or grain be not given to them, they have recourse to compulsion. The implements of their

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* Manual of the North Arcot district.

trade are knives and ordure. With the former they cut themselves until they draw blood, and the latter they throw into the house or shop of the person who proves uncharitable. They appear to possess the power of vomiting at pleasure, and use it to disgust people into a compliance with their demands. Sometimes they lie in the street, covering the entire face with dust, keeping, it is said, their eyes open the while, and breathing through the dust. Eventually they always succeed by some of these means in extorting what they consider their dues." Boys are regularly trained to vomit at will. They are made to drink as much hot water or conji (gruel) as they can, and taught how to bring it up. At first, they are made to put several fingers in the mouth, and tickle the base of the tongue, so as to give rise to vomiting. By constant practice, they learn how to vomit at any time. Just before they start on a begging round, they drink some fluid, which is brought up while they are engaged in their professional calling.

There are several proverbs relating to this class of mendicants, one of which is to the effect that the rough and rugged ground traversed by the Kalladi-siddhan is powdered to dust. Another gives the advice that, whichever way the Kalladi-mangam goes, you should dole out a measure of grain for him. Otherwise he will defile the road owing to his disgusting habits. A song, which the Mondi may often be heard warbling, runs as follows :—

> Mother, mother, Oh ! grandmother,
> Grandmother, who gave birth.
> Dole out my measure.

Their original ancestor is said to have been a shepherd, who had both his legs cut off by robbers in a jungle. The king of the country in compassion directed

that every one should pay him and his descendants, called mondi or lame, a small amount of money or grain.

The caste is divided into a series of bands, each of which has the right to collect alms within a particular area. The merchants and ryots are expected to pay them once a year, the former in money, and the latter in grain at harvest time. Each band recognises a headman, who, with the aid of the caste elders, settles marital and other disputes.

Marriage is usually celebrated after puberty. In the North Arcot district, it is customary for a man to marry his maternal uncle's daughter, and in the Madura district a man can claim his paternal aunt's daughter in marriage. The caste is considered so low in the social scale that Brāhmans will not officiate at marriages. Divorce is easy, and adultery with a man of higher caste is condoned more readily than a similar offence within the caste.

Mondolo.—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as an Oriya title given by Zamindars to the headmen of villages. It is also a title of various Oriya castes.

Mora Būvva.—A sub-division of Mādigas, who offer food (būvva) to the god in a winnowing basket (mora) at marriage.

Morasu.—The following legendary account of the origin of the "Morsu Vellallu" is given in the Baramahal Records.* "In the kingdom of Conjiveram, there was a village named Paluru, the residence of a chieftain, who ruled over a small district inhabited by the Morsu Vellallu. It so happened that one of them had a handsome daughter with whom the chieftain fell in love, and demanded her in marriage of her parents. But they

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* Section III, Inhabitants, Government Press, Madras, 1907.

would not comply with his demand, urging as an excuse the difference of caste, on which the inflamed lover determined on using force to obtain the object of his desires. This resolution coming to the knowledge of the parents of the girl, they held a consultation with the rest of the sect, and it was determined that for the present they should feign a compliance with his order, until they could meet with a favourable opportunity of quitting the country. They accordingly signified their consent to the matter, and fixed upon the nuptial day, and erected a pandal or temporary building in front of their house for the performance of the wedding ceremonies. At the proper time, the enamoured and enraptured chief sent in great state to the bride's house the wedding ornaments and clothes of considerable value, with grain and every other delicacy for the entertainment of the guests. The parents, having in concert with the other people of the sect prepared everything for flight, they put the ornaments and clothes on the body of a dog, which they tied to the centre pillar of the pandal, threw all the delicacies on the ground before him, and, taking their daughter, fled. Their flight soon came to the ears of the chief, who, being vexed and mortified at the trick they had played him, set out with his attendants like a raging lion in quest of his prey. The fugitives at length came to the banks of the Tungabhadra river, which they found full and impassable, and their cruel pursuer nigh at hand. In the dreadful dilemma, they addressed to the God Vishnu the following prayer. 'O! Venkatrāma (a title of Vishnu), if thou wilt graciously deign to enable us to ford this river, and wilt condescend to assist us in crossing the water, as thou didst Hanumant in passing over the vast ocean, we from henceforth will adopt thee

and thy ally Hanumant our tutelary deities.' Vishnu was pleased to grant their prayer, and by his command the water in an instant divided, and left a dry space, over which they passed. The moment they reached the opposite bank, the waters closed and prevented their adversary from pursuing them, who returned to his own country. The sect settled in the provinces near the Tungabhadra river, and in course of time spread over the districts which now form the eastern part of the kingdom of Mysore then called Morsu, and from thence arose their surname."

As in Africa, and among the American Indians, Australians, and Polynesians, so in Southern India artificial deformity of the hand is produced by chopping off some of the fingers. Writing in 1815, Buchanan (Hamilton)* says that "near Deonella or Deonhully, a town in Mysore, is a sect or sub-division of the Murressoo Wocal caste, every woman of which, previous to piercing the ears of her eldest daughter, preparatory to her being betrothed in marriage, must undergo the amputation of the first joints of third and fourth fingers of her right hand. The amputation is performed by the blacksmith of the village, who, having placed the finger in a block, performs the operation with a chisel. If the girl to be betrothed is motherless, and the mother of the boy has not before been subjected to the amputation, it is incumbent on her to suffer the operation." Of the same ceremony among the "Morsa-Okkala-Makkalu" of Mysore the Abbé Dubois † says that, if the bride's mother be dead, the bridegroom's mother, or in default of her the mother of the nearest relative, must submit to the cruel ordeal. In an editorial foot-note it is stated

* East India Gazetteer.

† Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies, Ed., 1897.

that this custom is no longer observed. Instead of the two fingers being amputated, they are now merely bound together, and thus rendered unfit for use. In the Census Report, 1891, it is recorded that this type of deformity is found among the Morasus, chiefly in Cuddapah, North Arcot, and Salem. "There is a sub-section of them called Veralu Icche Kāpulu, or Kāpulu who give the fingers, from a curious custom which requires that, when a grandchild is born in a family, the wife of the eldest son of the grandfather must have the last two joints of the third and fourth fingers of her right hand amputated at a temple of Bhairava." Further, it is stated in the Manual of the Salem district (1883) that "the practice now observed in this district is that, when a grandchild is born in a family, the eldest son of the grandfather, with his wife, appears at the temple for the ceremony of boring the child's ear, and there the woman has the last two joints of the third and fourth fingers chopped off. It does not signify whether the father of the first grandchild born be the eldest son or not, as in any case it is the wife of the eldest son who has to undergo the mutilation. After this, when children are born to other sons, their wives in succession undergo the operation. When a child is adopted, the same course is pursued."

The origin of the custom is narrated by Wilks,* and is briefly this. Mahadeo or Siva, who was in great peril, after hiding successively in a castor-oil and jawāri plantation, concealed himself in a linga-tonde shrub from a rākshasa who was pursuing him, to whom a Marasa Vakkaliga cultivator indicated, with the little finger of his right hand, the hiding-place of Siva. The god was only rescued from his peril by the interposition of Vishnu

* History of Mysore.

in the form of a lovely maiden meretriciously dressed, whom the lusty rākshasa, forgetting all about Siva, attempted to ravish, and was consumed to ashes. On emerging from his hiding-place, Siva decreed that the cultivator should forfeit the offending finger. The culprit's wife, who had just arrived at the field with food for her husband, hearing this dreadful sentence, threw herself at Siva's feet, and represented the certain ruin of her family if her husband should be disabled for some months from performing the labours of the farm, and besought the deity to accept two of her fingers instead of one from her husband. Siva, pleased with so sincere a proof of conjugal affection, accepted the exchange, and ordered that her family posterity in all future generations should sacrifice two fingers at his temple as a memorial of the transaction, and of their exclusive devotion to the god of the lingam. For the following account of the performance of the rite, as carried out by the Morasa Vakkaligaru of Mysore, I am indebted to an article by Mr. V. N. Narasimmiyengar.* "These people are roughly classed under three heads, viz.: (1) those whose women offer the sacrifice; (2) those who substitute for the fingers a piece of gold wire, twisted round fingers in the shape of rings. Instead of cutting the fingers off, the carpenter removes and appropriates the rings; (3) those who do not perform the rite. The *modus operandi* is as nearly as possible the following. About the time of the new moon in Chaitra, a propitious day is fixed by the village astrologer, and the woman who is to offer the sacrifice performs certain ceremonies or pujē in honour of Siva, taking food only once a day. For three days before the operation, she has to support herself with

* Ind. Antiquary, II, 1873.

milk, sugar, fruits, etc., all substantial food being eschewed. On the day appointed, a common cart is brought out, painted in alternate strips with white and red ochre, and adorned with gay flags, flowers, etc., in imitation of a car. Sheep or pigs are slaughtered before it, their number being generally governed by the number of children borne by the sacrificing woman. The cart is then dragged by bullocks, preceded by music, the woman and her husband following, with new pots filled with water and small pieces of silver money, borne on their heads, and accompanied by a retinue of friends and relatives. The village washerman has to spread clean cloths along the path of the procession, which stops near the boundary of the village, where a leafy bower is prepared, with three pieces of stone installed in it, symbolising the god Siva. Flowers, fruits, cocoanuts, incense, etc., are then offered, varied occasionally by an additional sheep or pig. A wooden seat is placed before the image, and the sacrificing woman places upon it her right hand with the fingers spread out. A man holds her hand firmly, and the village carpenter, placing his chisel on the first joints of her ring and little fingers, chops them off with a single stroke. The pieces lopped off are thrown into an ant-hill, and the tips of the mutilated fingers, round which rags are bound, are dipped into a vessel containing boiling gingily (*Sesamum indicum*) oil. A good skin eventually forms over the stump, which looks like a congenital malformation. The fee of the carpenter is one kanthirāya fanam (four annas eight pies) for each maimed finger, besides presents in kind. The woman undergoes the barbarous and painful ceremony without a murmur, and it is an article of the popular belief that, were it neglected, or if nails grow on the stump, dire ruin and misfortune will overtake the

recusant family. Staid matrons, who have had their fingers maimed for life in the above manner, exhibit their stumps with a pride worthy of a better cause. At the termination of the sacrifice, the woman is presented with cloths, flowers, etc., by her friends and relations, to whom a feast is given. Her children are placed on an adorned seat, and, after receiving presents of flowers, fruits, etc., their ears are pierced in the usual way. It is said that to do so before would be sacrilege." In a very full account of deformation of the hand by the Berulu Kodo sub-sect of the Vakaliga or ryat caste in Mysore, Mr. F. Fawcett says that it was regularly practiced until the Commissioner of Mysore put a stop to it about twenty years ago. "At present some take gold or silver pieces, stick them on to the finger's ends with flour paste, and either cut or pull them off. Others simply substitute an offering of small pieces of gold or silver for the amputation. Others, again, tie flowers round the fingers that used to be cut, and go through a pantomime of cutting by putting the chisel on the joint, and taking it away again. All the rest of the ceremony is just as it used to be." The introduction of the decorated cart, which has been referred to, is connected by Mr. Fawcett with a legend concerning a zemindar, who sought the daughters of seven brothers in marriage with three youths of his family. As carts were used in the flight from the zemindar, the ceremony is, to commemorate the event, called Bandi Dēvuru, or god of cars. As by throwing ear-rings into a river the fugitives passed through it, while the zemindar was drowned, the caste people insist on their women's ears being bored for ear-rings. And, in honour of the girls who cared more for the honour of their caste than for the distinction of marriage into a great family, the amputation

of part of two fingers of women of the caste was instituted.

"Since the prohibition of cutting off the fingers," Mr. L. Rice writes,* "the women content themselves with putting on a gold or silver finger-stall or thimble, which is pulled off instead of the finger itself."

Morasa Kāpulu women never touch the new grain of the year without worshipping the sun (Sūrya), and may not eat food prepared from this grain before this act of worship has been performed. They wrap themselves in a kambli (blanket) after a purificatory bath, prostrate themselves on the ground, raise their hands to the forehead in salutation, and make the usual offering of cocoanuts, etc. They are said, in times gone by, to have been lax in their morals and to have prayed to the sun to forgive them.

Morasu has further been returned as a sub-division of Holeya, Māla and Oddē. The name Morasu Paraiyan probably indicates Holeyas who have migrated from the Canarese to the Tamil country, and whose women, like the Kallans, wear a horse-shoe thread round the neck.

Motāti.—A sub-division of Kāpu.

Moyili.—The Moyilis or Moilis of South Canara are said † by Mr. H. A. Stuart to be "admittedly the descendants of the children of women attached to the temples, and their ranks are even now swelled in this manner. Their duties are similar to those of the Stānikas" (*q.v.*). In the Madras Census Report, 1901, Golaka (a bastard) is clubbed with Moili. In the Mysore Census Report, this term is said to be applied to children of Brāhmans by Malerus (temple servants in Mysore).

* Mysore. † Manual of the South Canara district.

The following account of the origin of the Moylars was given by Buchanan at the beginning of the nineteenth century.* "In the temples of Tuluva there prevails a very singular custom, which has given origin to a caste named Moylar. Any woman of the four pure castes—Brāhman, Kshatriya, Vaisya or Sudra—who is tired of her husband, or who (being a widow, and consequently incapable of marriage) is tired of a life of celibacy, goes to a temple, and eats some of the rice that is offered to the idol. She is then taken before the officers of Government, who assemble some people of her caste to inquire into the cause of her resolution; and, if she be of the Brāhman caste, to give her an option of living in the temple or out of its precincts. If she chooses the former, she gets a daily allowance of rice, and annually a piece of cloth. She must sweep the temple, fan the idol with a Tibet cow's tail and confine her amours to the Brāhmans. In fact she generally becomes a concubine to some officer of revenue who gives her a trifle in addition to her public allowance, and who will flog her severely if she grants favours to any other person. The male children of these women are called Moylar, but are fond of assuming the title of Stānika, and wear the Brāhmanical thread. As many of them as can procure employment live about the temples, sweep the areas, sprinkle them with an infusion of cow-dung, carry flambeaus before the gods, and perform other similar low offices."

The Moyilis are also called Dēvādigas, and should not be mixed with the Malerus (or Maleyavaru). Both do temple service, but the Maleru females are mostly prostitutes, whereas Moyili women are not. Malerus

* Journey through Mysore, etc.

are dancing-girls attached to the temples in South Canara, and their ranks are swelled by Konkani, Shivalli, and other Brāhman women of bad character.

The Moyilis have adopted the manners and customs of the Bants, and have the same balis (septs) as the Bants and Billavas.

Mucchi.—The Mucchis or Mōchis are summed up, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as being a Marāthi caste of painters and leather-workers. In the Mysore Census Report it is noted that "to the leather-working caste may be added a small body of Mōchis, shoemakers and saddlers. They are immigrant Mahrātās, who, it is said, came into Mysore with Khasim Khān, the general of Aurangzīb. They claim to be Kshatriyas and Rājputs —pretensions which are not generally admitted. They are shoemakers and saddlers by trade, and are all Saivas by faith." "The Mucchi," Mr. A. Chatterton writes,* "is not a tanner, and as a leather-worker only engages in the higher branches of the trade. Some of them make shoes, but draw the line at sandals. A considerable number are engaged as menial servants in Government offices. Throughout the country, nearly every office has its own Mucchi, whose principal duty is to keep in order the supplies of stationery, and from raw materials manufacture ink, envelopes and covers, and generally make himself useful. A good many of the so-called Mucchis, however, do not belong to the caste, as very few have wandered south of Madras, and they are mostly to be found in Ganjam and the Ceded Districts." The duties of the office Mucchi have further been summed up as "to mend pencils, prepare ink from powders, clean ink-bottles, stitch note-books, paste covers, rule forms,

* Monograph of Tanning and Working in Leather, Madras, 1904.

and affix stamps to covers and aid the despatch of tappals" (postal correspondence). In the Moochee's Hand-book * by the head Mucchi in the office of the Inspector-General of Ordnance, and contractor for black ink powder, it is stated that "the Rev. J. P. Rottler, in his Tamil and English dictionary, defines the word Mucchi as signifying trunk-maker, stationer, painter. Mucchi's work comprises the following duties:—

To make black, red, and blue writing ink, also ink of other colours as may seem requisite.

To mend quills, rule lines, make envelopes, mount or paste maps or plans on cloth with ribbon edges, pack parcels in wax-cloth, waterproof or common paper, seal letters, and open boxes or trunk parcels.

To take charge of boxes, issue stationery for current use, and supply petty articles.

To file printed forms, etc., and bind books."

In the Fort St. George Gazette, 1906, applications were invited from persons who have passed the Matriculation examination of the Madras University for the post of Mucchi on Rs. 8 per mensem in the office of a Deputy Superintendent of Police.

In the District Manuals, the various occupations of the Mucchis are summed up as book-binding, working in leather, making saddles and trunks, painting, making toys, and pen-making. At the present day, Mucchis (designers) are employed by piece-goods merchants in Madras in devising and painting new patterns for despatch to Europe, where they are engraved on copper cylinders. When, as at the present day, the bazars of Southern India are flooded with imported piece-goods of British manufacture, it is curious to look back,

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* G. D. Iyah Pillay, Madras, 1878.

and reflect that the term piece-goods was originally applied in trade to the Indian cotton fabrics exported to England.

The term Mucchi is applied to two entirely different sets of people. In Mysore and parts of the Ceded Districts, it refers to Marāthi-speaking workers in leather. But it is further applied to Telugu-speaking people, called Rāju, Jīnigāra, or Chitrakāra, who are mainly engaged in painting, making toys, etc., and not in leather-work. (*See* Rāchevar.)

Mucherikāla.—Recorded by Mr. F. S. Mullaly* as a synonym of a thief class in the Telugu country.

Mudali.—The title Mudali is used chiefly by the offspring of Dēva-dāsis (dancing-girls), Kaikōlans, and Vellālas. The Vellālas generally take the title Mudali in the northern, and Pillai in the southern districts. By some Vellālas, Mudali is considered discourteous, as it is also the title of weavers.† Mudali further occurs as a title of some Jains, Gadabas, Ōcchans, Pallis or Vanniyans, and Panisavans. Some Pattanavans style themselves Varūnakula Mudali.

Mudavāndi.—The Mudavāndis are said ‡ to be "a special begging class, descended from Vellāla Goundans, since they had the immemorial privilege of taking possession, as of right, of any Vellāla child that was infirm or maimed. The Modivāndi made his claim by spitting into the child's face, and the parents were then obliged, even against their will, to give it up. Thenceforward it was a Modivāndi, and married among them. The custom has fallen into desuetude for the last forty or fifty years, as a complaint of abduction would entail

* Notes on Criminal Classes of the Madras Presidency.

† Manual of the North Arcot district.

‡ Manual of the Coimbatore district.

serious consequences. Their special village is Modivāndi Satyamangalam near Erode. The chief Modivāndi, in 1887, applied for sanction to employ peons (orderlies) with belts and badges upon their begging tours, probably because contributions are less willingly made nowadays to idle men. They claim to be entitled to sheep and grain from the ryats."

In a note on the Mudavāndis, Mr. F. R. Hemingway writes that it is stated to be the custom that children born blind or lame in the Konga Vellāla caste are handed over by their parents to become Mudavāndis. If the parents hesitate to comply with the custom, the Mudavāndis tie a red cloth round the head of the child, and the parents can then no longer withhold their consent. They have to give the boy a bullock to ride on if he is lame, or a stick if he is blind.

A Revenue Officer writes (1902) that, at the village of Āndipalayam in the Salem district, there is a class of people called Modavāndi, whose profession is the adoption of the infirm members of the Konga Vellālas. Āndis are professional beggars. They go about among the Konga Vellālas, and all the blind and maimed children are pounced upon by them, and carried to their village. While parting with their children, the parents, always at the request of the children, give a few, sometimes rising to a hundred, rupees. The infirm never loses his status. He becomes the adopted child of the Āndi, and inherits half of his property invariably. They are married among the Āndis, and are well looked after. In return for their services, the Āndis receive four annas a head from the Konga Vellāla community annually, and the income from this source alone amounts to Rs. 6,400. A forty-first part share is given to the temple of Arthanarīswara at Trichengōdu. None of the Vellālas can refuse

the annual subscription, on pain of being placed under the ban of social excommunication, and the Āndi will not leave the Vellāla's house until the infirm child is handed over to him. One Tahsildar (revenue officer) asked himself why the Āndi's income should not be liable to income-tax, and the Āndis were collectively assessed. Of course, it was cancelled on appeal.

Mudi (knot).—An exogamous sept of Māla.

Mudiya.—The name, derived from mudi, a preparation of fried rice, of a sub-division of Chuditiya.

Muduvar.—The Muduvars or Mudugars are a tribe of hill cultivators in Coimbatore, Madura, Malabar, and Travancore. For the following note on those who inhabit the Cardamom hills, I am indebted to Mr. Aylmer Ff. Martin.

The name of the tribe is usually spelt Muduvar in English, and in Tamil pronounced Muthuvar, Muthuvar or Muthuvānāl. Outsiders sometimes call the tribe Thagappanmargal (a title sometimes used by low-caste people in addressing their masters). The Muduvars have a dialect of their own, closely allied to Tamil, with a few Malayālam words. Their names for males are mostly those of Hindu gods and heroes, but Kanjan (dry or stingy), Karupu Kunji (black chick), Kunjita (chicken) and Kar Mēgam (black cloud) are distinctive and common. For females, the names of goddesses and heroines, Karapayi (black), Koopi (sweepings), and Paychi (she-devil) are common. Boy twins are invariably Lutchuman and Rāman, girl twins Lutchmi and Rāmayi. Boy and girl twins are named Lutchman and Rāmayi, or Lutchmi and Rāman.

The Muduvars do not believe themselves to be indigenous to the hills; the legend, handed down from father to son, is that they originally lived in Madura.

Owing to troubles, or a war in which the Pāndyan Rāja of the times was engaged, they fled to the hills. When at Bōdināyakanūr, the pregnant women (or, as some say, a pregnant woman) were left behind, and eventually went with the offspring to the Nīlgiris, while the bulk of the tribe came to the High Range of North Travancore. There is supposed to be enmity between these rather vague Nīlgiri people and the Muduvars. The Nīlgiri people are said occasionally to visit Bōdināyakanūr, but, if by chance they are met by Muduvars, there is no speech between them, though each is supposed instinctively or intuitively to recognise the presence of the other. Those that came to the High Range carried their children up the ghāts on their backs, and it was thereupon decided to name the tribe Muduvar, or back people. According to another tradition, when they left Madura, they carried with them on their back the image of the goddess Mīnākshi, and brought it to Nēriyamangalam. It is stated by Mr. P. E. Conner * that the Muduvars "rank high in point of precedency among the hill tribes. They were originally Vellalās, tradition representing them as having accompanied some of the Madura princes to the Travancore hills." The approximate time of the exodus from Madura cannot even be guessed by any of the tribe, but it was possibly at the time when the Pāndyan Rājas entered the south, or more probably when the Telugu Naickers took possession of Bōdināyakanūr in the fourteenth century. It has also been suggested that the Muduvars were driven to the hills by the Muhammadan invaders in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Judging from the two distinct types of countenance, their language, and their curious mixture of

* Madras Journ. Lit. Science, I, 1833.

customs, I hazard the conjecture that, when they arrived on the hills, they found a small tribe in possession, with whom they subsequently intermarried, this tribe having affinities with the west coast, while the new arrivals were connected with the east.

The tribe is settled on the northern and western portion of the Cardamom Hills, and the High Range of Travancore, known as the Kanan Dēvan hills, and there is, I believe, one village on the Ānaimalai hills. They wander to some extent, less so now than formerly, owing to the establishment of the planting community in their midst. The head-quarters at present may be said to be on the western slopes of the High Range. The present Mēl Vāken or headman lives in a village on the western slope of the High Range at about 2,000 feet elevation, but villages occur up to 6,000 feet above sea level, the majority of villages being about 4,000 feet above the sea. The wandering takes place between the reaping of the final crop on one piece of land, and the sowing of the next. About November sees the breaking up of the old village, and February the establishment of the new. On the plateau of the High Range their dwellings are small rectangular, rather flat-roofed huts, made of jungle sticks or grass (both walls and root), and are very neat in appearance. On the western slopes, although the materials lend themselves to even neater building, their houses are usually of a rougher type. The materials used are the stems and leaves of the large-leaved īta (bamboo: *Ochlandra travancorica*) owing to the absence of grass-land country. The back of the house has no wall, the roof sloping on to the hillside behind, and the other walls are generally made of a rough sort of matting made by plaiting split īta stems.

Outsiders are theoretically not received into the caste, but a weaver caste boy and girl who were starving (in the famine of 1877, as far as I can make out), and deserted on the hills, were adopted, and, when they grew up, were allowed the full privileges of the caste. Since then, a 'Thotiya Naicker' child was similarly adopted, and is now a full-blown Muduvar with a Muduvar wife. On similar occasions, adoptions from similar or higher castes might take place, but the adoption of Pariahs or low-caste people would be quite impossible. In a lecture delivered some years ago by Mr. O. H. Bensley, it was stated that the Muduvars permit the entry of members of the Vellāla caste into their community, but insist upon a considerable period of probation before finally admitting the would-be Muduvar into their ranks.

If any dispute arises in the community, it is referred to the men of the village, who form an informal panchāyat (council), with the eldest or most influential man at its head. References are sometimes, but only seldom, made to the Mūppen, a sort of sub-headman of the tribe, except, perhaps, in the particular village in which he resides. The office of both Mūppen and Mēl Vāken is hereditary, and follows the marumakkatāyam custom, *i.e.*, descent to the eldest son of the eldest sister. The orders of the panchāyat, or of the headman, are not enforceable by any specified means. A sort of sending a delinquent to Coventry exists, but falls through when the matter has blown over. Adjudications only occur at the request of the parties concerned, or in the case of cohabitation between the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, when, on it becoming known, the guilty pair are banished to the jungle, but seem nevertheless to be able to visit the village at will. When disputes between

parties are settled against any one, he may be fined, generally in kind—a calf, a cow, a bull, or grain. There is no trial by ordeal. Oaths by the accuser, the accused, and partisans of both, are freely taken. The form of oath is to call upon God that the person swearing, or his child, may die within so many days if the oath is untrue, at the same time stepping over the Rāma kodu, which consists of lines drawn on the ground, one line for each day. It may consist of any number of lines, but three, five, or seven are usual. Increasing the number of lines indefinitely would be considered to be trifling with the subject.

There do not seem to be any good omens, but evil omens are numerous. The barking of 'jungle sheep' (barking deer) or sāmbar, the hill robin crossing the path when shifting the village, are examples. Oracles, magic, sorcery, witchcraft, and especially the evil eye, are believed in very firmly, but are not practiced by Muduvars. I was myself supposed to have exercised the evil eye at one time. It once became my duty to apportion to Muduvars land for their next year's cultivation, and I went round with some of them for this purpose, visiting the jungle they wished to clear. A particular friend of mine, called Kanjan, asked for a bit of secondary growth very close to a cinchona estate; it was, in fact, situated between Lower Nettigudy and Upper Nettigudy, and the main road passed quite close. I told him that there was no objection, except that it was most unusual, and that probably the estate coolies would rob the place; and I warned him very distinctly that, if evil came of his choice, he was not to put the blame on me. Shortly afterwards I left India, and was absent about three months, and, when I returned, I found that small-pox had practically wiped out that

village, thirty-seven out of forty inhabitants having died, including Kanjan. I was, of course, very sorry; but, as I found a small bit of the land in question had been felled, and there being no claimants, I planted it up with cinchona. As the smallpox had visited all the Muduvar villages, and had spread great havoc among them, I was not surprised at their being scarce, but I noticed, on the few occasions when I did see them, that they were always running away. When I got the opportunity, I cornered a man by practically riding him down, and asked for an explanation. He then told me that, of course, the tribe had been sorely troubled, because I told Kanjan in so many words that evil would come. I had then disappeared (to work my magic, no doubt), and returned just in time to take that very bit of land for myself. That was nearly five years ago, and confidence in me is only now being gradually restored.

The Muduvans have lucky days for starting on a journey—

> Monday, start before sunrise.
> Tuesday, start in the forenoon.
> Wednesday start before 7 A.M.
> Thursday, start after eating the morning meal.
> Friday, never make a start; it is a bad day.
> Saturday and Sunday, start as soon as the sun has risen.

When boys reach puberty, the parents give a feast to the village. In the case of a girl, a feast is likewise given, and she occupies, for the duration of the menstrual period, a hut set apart for all the women in the village to occupy during their uncleanness. When it is over, she washes her clothes, and takes a bath, washing her head. This is just what every woman of the village always does. There is no mutilation, and the girl just

changes her child's dress for that of a woman. The married women of the village assist at confinements. Twins bring good luck. Monsters are said to be sometimes born, bearing the form of little tigers, cows, monkeys, etc. On these occasions, the mother is said generally to die, but, when she does not die, she is said to eat the monster. Monstrosities must anyway be killed. Childless couples are dieted to make them fruitful, the principal diet for a man being plenty of black monkey, and for a woman a compound of various herbs and spices.

A man may not marry the daughter of his brother or sister; he ought to marry his uncle's daughter, and he may have two or three wives, who may or may not be sisters. Among the plateau Muduvars, both polygamy and polyandry are permitted, the former being common, and the latter occasional. In the case of the latter, brothers are prohibited from having a common wife, as also are cousins on the father's side. In the case of polygamy, the first married is the head wife, and the others take orders from her, but she has no other privileges. If the wives are amicably disposed, they live together, but, when inclined to disagree, they are given separate houses for the sake of peace and harmony. With quarrelsome women, one wife may be in one village, and the others in another. A man may be polygamous in one village, and be one of a polyandrous lot of men a few miles off. On the Cardamom Hills, and on the western slopes, where the majority of the tribe live, they are monogamous, and express abhorrence of both the polygamous and polyandrous condition, though they admit, with an affectation of amused disgust, that both are practiced by their brethren on the high lands.

Marriages are arranged by the friends, and more often by the cousins on the mother's side of the

bridegroom, who request the hand of a girl or woman from her parents. If they agree, the consent of the most remote relatives has also to be obtained, and, if everyone is amicable, a day is fixed, and the happy couple leave the village to live a few days in a cave by themselves. On their return, they announce whether they would like to go on with it, or not. In the former case, the man publicly gives ear-rings, a metal (generally brass) bangle, a cloth, and a comb to the woman, and takes her to his hut. The comb is a poor affair made of split īta or perhaps of bamboo, but it is the essential part of the ceremony. If the probationary period in the cave has not proved quite satisfactory to both parties, the marriage is put off, and the man and the woman are both at liberty to try again with some one else. Betrothal does not exist as a ceremony, though families often agree together to marry their children together, but this is not binding in any way. The tying of the tāli (marriage badge) is said to have been tried in former days as part of the marriage ceremony, but, as the bride always died, the practice was discontinued. Remarriage of widows is permitted, and the widow by right belongs to, or should be taken over by her deceased husband's maternal aunt's son, and not, under any circumstances, by any of his brothers. In practice she marries almost any one but one of the brothers. No man should visit the house of his younger brother's wife, or even look at that lady. This prohibition does not extend to the wives of his elder brothers, but sexual intercourse even here would be incest. The same ceremonies are gone through at the remarriage of a widow as in an ordinary marriage, the ear-rings and bangles, which she discarded on the death of the previous husband, being replaced. Widows do not wear a special dress, but are known by the absence of jewelry.

Elopements occur. When a man and woman do not obtain the consent of the proper parties, they run away into the jungle or a cave, visiting the village frequently, and getting grain, etc., from sympathisers. The anger aroused by their disgraceful conduct having subsided, they quietly return to the village, and live as man and wife. [It is noted, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, that, after a marriage is settled, the bridegroom forcibly takes away the maiden from her mother's house when she goes out for water or firewood, and lives with her separately for a few days or weeks in some secluded part of the forest. They then return, unless in the meantime they are searched for, and brought back by their relations.] In theory, a man may divorce his wife at will, but it is scarcely etiquette to do so, except for infidelity, or in the case of incompatibility of temper. If he wants to get rid of her for less horrible crimes, he can palm her off on a friend. A woman cannot divorce her husband at all in theory, but she can make his life so unbearable that he gladly allows her to palm herself off on somebody else. Wives who have been divorced marry again freely.

The tribe follow the west coast or marumakkatāyam law of inheritance with a slight difference, the property descending to an elder or younger sister's son. Property, which seldom consists of more than a bill-hook, a blanket, and a few cattle, always goes to a nephew, and is not divided in any way.

The tribe professes to be Hindu, and the chief gods are Panaliāndavar (a corruption of Palaniāndi) and Kadavallu, who are supposed to live in the Madura temple with Mīnākshiammal and her husband Sokuru. They are also said to worship Chāntiāttu Bhagavati and Nēriyamangalam Sāsta. Sūryan (the sun) is a beneficent deity. The deities which are considered maleficent are numerous,

and all require propitiation. This is not very taxing, as a respectful attitude when passing their reputed haunts seems to suffice. They are alluded to as Karapu (black ones). One in particular is Nyamaru, who lives on Nyamamallai, the jungles round which were said to be badly haunted. At present they are flourishing tea estates, so Nyamaru has retired to the scrub at the top of the mountain. Certain caves are regarded as shrines, where spear-heads, a trident or two, and copper coins are placed, partly to mark them as holy places, and partly as offerings to bring good luck, good health, or good fortune. They occur in the most remote spots. The only important festival is Thai Pongal, when all who visit the village, be they who they may, must be fed. It occurs about the middle of January, and is a time of feasting and rejoicing.

The tribe does not employ priests of other castes to perform religious ceremonies. Muduvars who are half-witted, or it may be eccentric, are recognised as Swāmyars or priests. If one desires to get rid of a headache or illness, the Swāmyar is told that he will get four annas or so if the complaint is soon removed, but he is not expected to perform miracles, or to make any active demonstration over the matter. Swāmyars who spend their time in talking to the sun and moon as their brethren, and in supplications to mysterious and unknown beings, are the usual sort, and, if they live a celibate life, they are greatly esteemed. For those who live principally on milk, in addition to practicing the other virtue, the greatest reverence is felt. Such an one occurs only once or twice in a century.

The dead are buried lying down, face upwards, and placed north and south. The grave has a little thatched roof, about six feet by two, put over it. A stone,

weighing twenty or thirty pounds, is put at the head, and a similar stone at the feet. These serve to mark the spot when the roof perishes, or is burnt during the next grass fire. The depth of the grave is, for a man, judged sufficient if the gravedigger, standing on the bottom, finds the level of the ground up to his waist, but, for a woman, it must be up to his armpits. The reason is that the surviving women do not like to think that they will be very near the surface, but the men are brave, and know that, if they lie north and south, nothing can harm them, and no evil approach. The ghosts of those killed by accident or dying a violent death, haunt the spot till the memory of the occurrence fades from the minds of the survivors and of succeeding generations. These ghosts are not propitiated, but the haunted spots are avoided as much as possible. The Muduvars share with many other jungle-folk the idea that, if any animal killed by a tiger or leopard falls so as to lie north and south, it will not be eaten by the beast of prey. Nor will it be re-visited, so that sitting over a "kill" which has fallen north and south, in the hopes of getting a shot at the returning tiger or leopard, is a useless proceeding.

Totemism does not exist, but, in common with other jungle tribes, the tiger is often alluded to as jackal.

Fire is still often made by means of the flint and steel, though match-boxes are common enough. Some dry cotton (generally in a dirty condition) is placed along the flint, the edge of which is struck with the steel. The spark generated ignites the cotton, and is carefully nursed into flame in dead and dry grass. The Muduvars also know how to make fire by friction, but nowadays this is very seldom resorted to. A rotten log of a particular kind of tree has first to be found, the inside of

which is in an extremely dry and powdery condition, while the outside is still fairly hard. Some of the top of the topmost side of the recumbent log having been cut away at a suitable place, and most of the inside removed, a very hard and pointed bit of wood is rapidly rotated against the inner shell of the log where the powdery stuff is likely to ignite, and this soon begins to smoke, the fire being then nursed much in the same way as with the fire generated by the flint and steel.

By the men, the langūti and leg cloth of the Tamils are worn. A turban is also worn, and a cumbly or blanket is invariably carried, and put on when it rains. [It is noted, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, that males dress themselves like the Maravans of the low country. A huge turban is almost an invariable portion of the toilette. The chief of the Mudavars is known as Vākka, without whose consent the head-dress is not to be worn.] I have seen a Muduvar with an umbrella. Nowadays, the discarded coats of planters, and even trousers and tattered riding-breeches are common, and a Muduvar has been seen wearing a blazer. The men wear ear-rings, supposed to be, and sometimes in reality, of gold, with bits of glass of different colours in them, and also silver or brass finger and toe rings, and sometimes a bangle on each arm or on one leg. The women go in very largely for beads, strings of them adorning their necks, white and blue being favourite colours. Rings for the ears, fingers and toes, and sometimes many glass bangles on the arms, and an anklet on each leg, are the usual things, the pattern of the metal jewelry being often the same as seen on the women of the plains. The cloth, after being brought round the waist, and tucked in there, is carried over the body, and two corners are knotted on the right shoulder. Unmarried girls wear

less jewelry than the married women, and widows wear no jewelry till they are remarried, when they can in no way be distinguished from their sisters. Tattooing is not practiced. Sometimes a stout thread is worn on the arm, with a metal cylinder containing some charm against illness or the evil eye, but only the wise men or elders of the caste lay much store on, or have knowledge of these things.

The Muduvars believe that they were originally cultivators of the soil, and their surroundings and tastes have made them become hunters and trappers, since coming to the hills. At the present day, they cut down a bit of secondary jungle or cheppukad, and, after burning it off, sow rāgi (millet), or, where the rainfall is sufficient, hill-rice, which is weeded and tended by the women, the men contenting themselves by trying to keep out the enemies to their crops. After harvest there is not much to be done, except building a new village perhaps, making traps, and shooting. All they catch is game to them, though we should describe some of the animals as vermin. They catch rats, squirrels, quail, jungle fowl, porcupines, mouse-deer, and fish. They kill, with a blowpipe and dart, many small birds. The traps in use are varied, but there are three principal ones, one of which looks like a big bow. It is fixed upright in the ground as a spring to close with a snap a small upright triangle of sharp-edged bamboo, to which it is connected, and into which any luckless small game may have intruded its head, induced to do so by finding all other roads closed with a cunningly made fence. Another is a bent sapling, from which a loop of twine or fibre hangs on what appears to be the ground, but is really a little platform on which the jungle fowl treads, and immediately finds itself caught by both legs, and

hanging in mid-air. The third is very much the same, but of stouter build. The loop is upright, and set in a hedge constructed for the purpose of keeping the fretful porcupine in the path, passing along which the beast unconsciously releases a pin, back flies the sapling, and the porcupine is hung. If fouled in any way, he generally uses his teeth to advantage, and escapes. The Muduvars are also adepts at catching 'ibex' (wild goat), which are driven towards a fence with nooses set in it at proper points, which cause the beasts to break their necks. Fish are caught in very beautifully constructed cruives, and also on the hook, while, on the larger rivers below the plateau, the use of the night-line is understood. With the gun, sambar, 'ibex,' barking deer, mungooses, monkeys, squirrels, and martens are killed. Besides being a good shot, the Muduvar, when using his own powder, takes no risks. The stalk is continued until game is approached, sometimes to within a few yards, when a charge of slugs from the antiquated match-lock has the same effect as the most up-to-date bullet from the most modern weapon. Mr. Bensley records how, on one occasion, two English planters went out with two Muduvars after 'bison.' One of the Muduvars, carrying a rifle, tripped, and the weapon exploded, killing one of the planters on the spot. The two Muduvars immediately took to their heels. The other planter covered them with his rifle, and threatened to shoot them if they did not return, which they at last did. Mr. Bensley held the magisterial enquiry, and the Muduvars were amazed at escaping capital punishment.

In their agricultural operations, the Muduvars are very happy-go-lucky. They have no scare-crows to avert injury to crops or frighten away demons, but they employ many devices for keeping off pigs, sāmbar, and barking

deer from their crops, none of which appear to be efficacious for long. The implement *par excellence* of the Muduvar is the bill-hook, from which he never parts company, and with which he can do almost anything, from building a house to skinning a rat, or from hammering sheet-lead into bullets to planting maize.

The bulk of the tribe live on rāgi or hill-rice, and whatever vegetables they can grow, and whatever meat they trap or shoot. They esteem the flesh of the black monkey (*Semnopithecus johni*) above everything, and lust after it. I have seen a Muduvar much pulled down by illness seize an expiring monkey, and suck the blood from its jugular vein. Muduvars will not eat beef, dog, jackals, or snakes, but will eat several sorts of lizards, and rats, 'ibex,' and all the deer tribe, fish, fowl, and other birds, except kites and vultures, are put into the pot. The plateau Muduvars, and those on the eastern slopes, will not eat pig in any shape or form. Those on the western slopes are very keen on wild pig, and this fact causes them to be somewhat looked down upon by the others. I think this pork-eating habit is due to the absence of sāmbar or other deer in the heart of the forests. Muduvars are fond of alcohol in any shape or form. They take a liquor from a wild palm which grows on the western slopes, and, after allowing it to become fermented, drink it freely. Some members of the tribe, living in the vicinity of these palms, are more or less in a state of intoxication during the whole time it is in season. Their name for the drink is tippily-kal, and the palm resembles the kittūl (*Caryota urens*). The western slope Muduvars are acquainted with opium from the west coast, and some of them are slaves to the habit. The Muduvars do not admit that any other caste is good enough to eat, drink, or smoke with

them. They say that, once upon a time, they permitted these privileges to Vellālans, but this fact induced so many visitors to arrive that they really could not afford it any more, so they eat, drink, and smoke with no one now, but will give uncooked food to passing strangers.

I have never heard any proverb, song, or folk-tale of the Muduvars, and believe the story of their arrival on the hills to be their stock tale. They have a story, which is more a statement of belief than anything else, that, when a certain bamboo below Pallivasal flowers, a son of the Mahārāja of Travancore turns into a tiger or puli-manisan, and devours people. Men often turn into puli-manisan owing chiefly to witchcraft on the part of others, and stories of such happenings are often told. The nearest approach to a proverb I have heard is Tingakilamei nalla tingalam, which sounds rather tame and meaningless in English, "On Monday you can eat well"—the play on the words being quite lost.

The Muduvars make a miniature tom-tom by stretching monkey skin over a firm frame of split bamboo or īta, on which the maker thereof will strum by the hour much to his own enjoyment.

In former days, the whole tribe were very shy of strangers, and it is only within the last thirty years that they have become used to having dealings with outsiders. Old men still tell of the days when robbers from the Coimbatore side used to come up, burn the Muduvar villages, and carry off what cattle or fowls they could find. Even now, there are some of the men in whom this fear of strangers seems to be innate, and who have never spoken to Europeans. In the women this feeling is accentuated, for, when suddenly met with, they make themselves scarce in the most surprising way, and find

cover as instinctively as a quail chick. There are now and again men in the tribe who aspire to read, but I do not know how far any of them succeed.

The Muduvars are becoming accustomed to quite wonderful things—the harnessing of water which generates electricity to work machinery, the mono-rail tram which now runs through their country, and, most wonderful of all, the telephone. An old man described how he would raise envy and wonder in the hearts of his tribe by relating his experience. "I am the first of my caste to speak and hear over five miles," said he, with evident delight.

I have alluded to the two different types of countenance; perhaps there is a third resulting from a mixture of the other two. The first is distinctly aquiline-nosed and thin-lipped, and to this type the men generally belong. The second is flat-nosed, wide-nostrilled, and thick-lipped, and this fairly represents the women, who compare most unfavourably with the men in face. I have never seen men of the second type, but of an intermediate type they are not uncommon. On the Cardamom Hills there may still exist a tribe of dwarfs, of which very little is known. The late Mr. J. D. Munro had collected a little information about them. Mr. A. W. Turner had the luck to come across one, who was caught eating part of a barking deer raw. Mr. Turner managed to do a little conversation with the man by signs, and afterwards he related the incident to Srīrangam, a good old Muduvar shikāri (sportsman), who listened thoughtfully, and then asked "Did you not shoot him?" The question put a new complexion on to the character of the usually peaceful and timid Muduvar.

I know the Muduvars to be capable of real affection. Kanjan was very proud of his little son, and used to make

plans for wounding an ibex, so that his boy might finish it off, and thus become accustomed to shooting.

In South Coimbatore, "honey-combs are collected by Irulas, Muduvars, and Kādirs. The collection is a dangerous occupation. A hill-man, with a torch in his hand and a number of bamboo tubes suspended from his shoulders, descends by means of ropes or creepers to the vicinity of the comb. The sight of the torch drives away the bees, and he proceeds to fill the bamboos with the comb, and then ascends to the top of the rock." *

Mūgi (dumb).—An exogamous sept of Golla.

Mūka.—A sub-division of Konda Rāzu.

Mūka Dora.—Mūka is recorded, in the Madras Census Reports, 1891 and 1901, as a sub-division and synonym of Konda Dora, and I am informed that the Mūka Doras, in Vizagapatam, hold a high position, and most of the chiefs among the Konda Doras are Mūka Doras. Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao, to whom I am indebted to the following note, inclines to the opinion that the Mūka Doras form a caste distinct from the Konda Doras. They are traditionally regarded as one of the primitive hill tribes, but their customs at the present day exhibit a great deal of low-country influence. They speak Telugu, their personal names are pure Telugu, and their titles are Anna and Ayya as well as Dora. They recognize one Vantāri Dora of Padmapuram as their head.

The Mūka Doras are agriculturists and pushing petty traders. They may be seen travelling about the country with pack bullocks at the rice harvest season. They irrigate their lands with liquid manure in a manner similar to the Kunnuvans of the Palni hills in the Madura country.

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* Agricult: Ledger Series, Calcutta, No. 7, 1904.

They are divided into two sections, viz., Kōrā-vamsam, which reveres the sun, and Nāga-vamsam, which reveres the cobra, and have further various exogamous septs or intipērulu, such as vēmu or nīm tree (*Melia Azadirachta*), chikkudi (*Dolichos Lablab*), velanga (*Feronia elephantum*), kākara (*Momordica Charantia*).

Girls are married either before or after puberty. The mēnarikam system is in force, according to which a man should marry his maternal uncle's daughter. On an auspicious day, some of the elders of the future bride-groom's family take a cock or goat, a new cloth for the girl's mother, rice and liquor to the girl's house. The presents are usually accepted, and the pasupu (turmeric) ceremony, practiced by many Telugu castes, is performed. On an appointed day, the bridegroom's party repair to the house of the bride, and bring her in procession to the house of the bridegroom. Early next morning, the contracting couple enter a pandal (booth), the two central pillars of which are made of the nērēdi (*Eugenia Jambolana*) and relli (*Cassia Fistula*) trees. The maternal uncle, who officiates, links their little fingers together. Their bodies are anointed with castor-oil mixed with turmeric powder, and they bathe. New cloths are then given to them by their fathers-in-law. Some rice is poured over the floor of the house, and the bride and bridegroom measure this three times. The ends of their cloths are tied together, and a procession is formed, which proceeds to the bank of a stream, where the bride fetches tooth-cleaning sticks three times, and gives them to the bridegroom, who repeats the process. They then sit down together, and clean their teeth. After a bath in the stream, the ends of their clothes are once more tied together, and the procession returns to

the bridegroom's house. The bride cooks some of the rice which has already been measured with water brought from the stream, and the pair partake thereof. A caste feast, with much drinking, is held on this and the two following days. The newly-married couple then proceed, in the company of an old man, to the bride's house, and remain there from three to five days. If the girl is adult, she then goes to the home of her husband.

When a girl reaches puberty, she is placed apart in a room, and sits within a triangular enclosure made by means of three arrows stuck in the ground, and connected together by three rounds of thread. From the roof a cradle, containing a stone, is placed. On the last day, a twig of the nērēdi tree is plucked, planted on the way to the village stream, and watered. As she passes the spot, the girl pulls it out of the ground, and takes it to the stream, into which she throws it. She then bathes therein.

The dead are, as a rule, burnt, and death pollution is observed for three days, during which the caste occupation is not carried out. On the fourth day, a ceremony, called pasupu muttukōvadam, or touching turmeric, is performed. The relations of the deceased repair to the spot where the corpse was burnt, collect the ashes, and sprinkle cow-dung, nērēdi and tamarind water over the spot. Some food is cooked, and three handfuls are thrown to the crows. They then perform a ceremonial ablution. The ceremony corresponds to the chinnarōzu, or little day ceremony, of the low-country castes. The more well-to-do Mūka Doras perform the peddarōzu, or big day ceremony, on the twelfth day, or later on. The relations of the deceased then plant a plantain on the spot where he was burnt, and throw turmeric, castor-oil, and money according to their means. The coins are

collected, and used for the purchase of materials for a feast.

Mukkara (nose or ear ornament).—An exogamous sept of Bōya.

Mukkuvan.—The Mukkuvans are the sea fishermen of the Malabar coast, who are described as follows by Buchanan.* "The Mucua, or in the plural Mucuar, are a tribe who live near the sea-coast of Malayala, to the inland parts of which they seldom go, and beyond its limits any way they rarely venture. Their proper business is that of fishermen, as palanquin-bearers for persons of low birth, or of no caste; but they serve also as boatmen. The utmost distance to which they will venture on a voyage is to Mangalore. In some places they cultivate the cocoanut. In the southern parts of the province most of them have become Mussulmans, but continue to follow their usual occupations. These are held in the utmost contempt by those of the north, who have given up all communication with the apostates. Those here do not pretend to be Sudras, and readily acknowledge the superior dignity of the Tiars. They have hereditary chiefs called Arayan, who settle disputes, and, with the assistance of a council, punish by fine or excommunication those who transgress the rules of the caste. The deity of the caste is the goddess Bhadra-Kāli, who is represented by a log of wood, which is placed in a hut that is called a temple. Four times a year the Mucuas assemble, sacrifice a cock, and make offerings of fruit to the log of wood. One of the caste acts as priest (pūjāri). They are not admitted to enter within the precincts of any of the temples of the great gods who are worshipped by the

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* Journey through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, 1807.

Brāhmans ; but they sometimes stand at a distance, and send their offerings by more pure hands."

It is recorded by Captain Hamilton * that he saw "at many Muchwa Houses, a square Stake of Wood, with a few Notches cut about it, and that Stake drove into the Ground, about two Foot of it being left above, and that is covered with Cadjans or Cocoanut Tree Leaves, and is a Temple and a God to that Family."

In the Gazetteer of Malabar (1908), the following account of the Mukkuvans is given. "A caste, which according to a probably erroneous tradition came originally from Ceylon, is that of the Mukkuvans, a caste of fishermen following marumakkatāyam (inheritance through the female line) in the north, and makkattāyam (inheritance from father to son) in the south. Their traditional occupations also include chunam (lime) making, and manchal-bearing (a manchal is a kind of hammock slung on a pole, and carried by four men, two at each end). In the extreme south of the district they are called Arayans, † a term elsewhere used as a title of their headmen. North of Cannanore there are some fishermen, known as Mugavars or Mugayans, who are presumably the same as the Mugayars of South Canara. Another account is that the Mugayans are properly river-fishers, and the Mukkuvans sea-fishers ; but the distinction does not seem to hold good in fact. The Mukkuvans rank below the Tiyans and the artisan classes ; and it is creditable to the community that some of its members have recently risen to occupy such offices as that of Sub-magistrate and Sub-registrar. The caste has supplied many

* A New Account of the East Indies, 1744.

† I am informed that the Mukkuvans claim to be a caste distinct from the Arayans.

converts to the ranks of Muhammadanism. In North Malabar the Mukkuvans are divided into four exogamous illams, called Ponillam (pon, gold), Chembillam (chembu, copper), Kārillam, and Kāchillam, and are hence called Nālillakkar, or people of the four illams; while the South Malabar Mukkuvans and Arayans have only the three latter illams, and are therefore called Mūnillakkar, or people of the three illams. There is also a section of the caste called Kāvuthiyans, who act as barbers to the others, and are sometimes called Panimagans (work-children). The Nālillakkar are regarded as superior to the Mūnillakkar and the Kāvuthiyans, and exact various signs of respect from them. The Kāvuthiyans, like other barber castes, have special functions to perform in connection with the removal of ceremonial pollution; and it is interesting to note that sea-water is used in the ritual sprinklings for this purpose. The old caste organisation seems to have persisted to the present day among the Mukkuvans to an extent which can be paralleled amongst few other castes. They have assemblies (rājiams) of elders called Kadavans, or Kadakkōdis, presided over by presidents called Arayans or Karnavans, who settle questions of caste etiquette, and also constitute a divorce court. The position of the Arayans, like that of the Kadavans, is hereditary. It is said to have been conferred by the different Rājas in their respective territories, with certain insignia, a painted cadjan (palm leaf) umbrella, a stick, and a red silk sash. The Arayans are also entitled to the heads of porpoises captured in their jurisdictions, and to presents of tobacco and *pān supari* when a girl attains puberty or is married. Their consent is necessary to all regular marriages. The Mukkuvans have their oracles or seers called Ayittans or Attans; and,

when an Arayan dies, these select his successor from his Anandravans, while under the influence of the divine afflatus, and also choose from among the younger members of the Kadavan families priests called Mānakkans or Bānakkans, to perform pūja in their temples.

"Fishing is the hereditary occupation of the Mukkuvans. Their boats, made of aini (*Artocarpus hirsuta*) or mango wood, and fitted with a mat sail, cost from Rs. 200 to Rs. 500, and carry a crew of 5 or 8 men according to size. Their nets are of all shapes and sizes, ranging from a fine net with a $\frac{3}{8}''$ mesh for sardines and such small fry to a stout valiya srāvuvala or shark net with a $6\frac{1}{2}''$ or $7''$ mesh; and for a big Badagara boat a complete equipment is said to cost Rs. 1,000. The nets are generally made of fibre, cotton thread being used only for nets with the finest mesh. Salt is not usually carried in the boats, and the fish decompose so rapidly in the tropical sun that the usual fishing grounds are comparatively close to the shore; but boats sometimes venture out ten, fifteen, or even twenty miles. Shoals of the migratory sardine, which are pursued by predaceous sharks, kora, and cat-fish, yield the richest harvest of fishes great and small to the Mukkuvan. Huge quantities of mackerel or aila are also caught, and seir, white and black pomfret, prawns, whiting, and soles are common. The arrival of the boats is the great event of the day in a fishing village. Willing hands help to drag them up the beach, and an eager crowd gathers round each boat, discussing the catch and haggling over the price. The pile of fish soon melts away, and a string of coolies, each with a basket of fish on his head, starts off at a sling trot into the interior, and soon distributes the catch over a large area. Relays of runners convey fresh fish from Badagara and Tellicherry even as far as the

Wynaad. All that is left unsold is taken from the boats to the yards to be cured under the supervision of the Salt Department with Tuticorin salt supplied at the rate of 10 annas per maund. The fisherman is sometimes also the curer, but usually the two are distinct, and the former disposes of the fish to the latter 'on fixed terms to a fixed customer,' and 'looks to him for support during the slack season, the rainy and stormy south-west monsoon.' The salt fish is conveyed by coasting steamers to Ceylon, and by the Madras Railway to Coimbatore, Salem, and other places. Sardines are the most popular fish, and are known as kudumbam pulartti, or the family blessing. In a good year, 200 sardines can be had for a single pie. Sun-dried, they form valuable manure for the coffee planter and the cocoanut grower, and are exported to Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, and occasionally to China and Japan; and, boiled with a little water, they yield quantities of fish oil for export to Europe and Indian ports. Salted shark is esteemed a delicacy, particularly for a nursing woman. Sharks' fins find a ready sale, and are exported to China by way of Bombay. The maws or sounds of kora and cat-fishes are dried, and shipped to China and Europe for the preparation of isinglass."* It will be interesting to watch the effect of the recently instituted Fishery Bureau in developing the fishing industry and system of fish-curing in Southern India.

Mukkuvans work side by side with Māppillas both at the fishing grounds and in the curing yards, and the two classes will eat together. It is said that, in former times, Māppillas were allowed to contract alliances with Mukkuva women, and that male children born as a

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* For further details concerning the fisheries and fish-curing operations of the West Coast, *see* Thurston, Madras Museum Bull. III, 2, 1900.

result thereof on Friday were handed over to the Māppilla community. It is recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, that "conversion to Islam is common among this caste. The converts are called Puislam or Putiya Islam * (new Islam). All Puislams follow the occupation of fishing. In the northernmost taluks there is a rule that Mukkuva females during their periods cannot remain in the house, but must occupy the house of a Māppilla, which shows that the two castes live on very close terms." The fishermen at Tanūr are for the most part Puislamites, and will not go out fishing on Fridays.

From a recent note (1908), I gather that the Mukkuvas and Puislams of Tanūr have been prospering of late years, and would appear to be going in for a display of their prosperity by moving about arrayed in showy shirts, watch-chains, shoes of the kind known as Arabi cherippu, etc. This sort of ostentation has evidently not been appreciated by the Moplahs, who, it is said, sent round the Mukkuva village, known as Mukkadi, some Cherumas, numbering over sixty, to notify by beat of kerosene tins that any Mukkuva or Puislam who went into the Moplah bazaar wearing a shirt or coat or shoes would go in peril of his life. Some days after this alleged notification, two Mukkuvas and a Mukkuva woman complained to the Tirūr Sub-Magistrate that they had been waylaid by several Moplahs on the public road in the Tanūr bazaar, and had been severely beaten, the accused also robbing the woman of some gold ornaments which were on her person. I am informed that Tanūr is the only place where this feeling exists. Puislams and Māppillas settle down together peacefully enough elsewhere.

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* Spelt Pusler in a recent educational report.

There are two titles in vogue among the Mukkuvans, viz., Arayan and Marakkan. Of these, the former is the title of the headmen and members of their families, and the latter a title of ordinary members of the community. The caste deity is said to be Bhadrakāli, and the Mukkuvans have temples of their own, whereat worship is performed by Yōgi Gurukkals, or, it is said, by the Karanavans of certain families who have been initiated by a Yōgi Gurukkal.

At Tellicherry there are two headmen, called Arayanmar, belonging to the Kāchillam and Ponillam sections. In addition to the headmen, there are caste servants called Mānākkan. It is stated, in the Manual of the South Canara district, that "there is an hereditary headman of the caste called the Ayathen, who settles disputes. For trifling faults the ordinary punishment is to direct the culprit to supply so much oil for lights to be burnt before the caste demon." The Velichapāds, or oracles who become possessed by the spirit of the deity among the Mukkuvans, are called Ayathen, which is probably an abbreviation of Ayuthathan, meaning a sword or weapon-bearer, as the oracle, when under the influence of the deity, carries a sword or knife.

As among other Malayālam castes, Mukkuva girls must go through a ceremony before they attain puberty. This is called pandal kizhikkal, and corresponds to the tāli-kettu kalyānam of the other castes. The consent of the Arayan is necessary for the performance of this ceremony. On the night previous thereto, the girl is smeared with turmeric paste and oil. Early on the following morning, she is brought to the pandal (booth), which is erected in front of the house, and supported by four bamboo posts. She is bathed by having water poured over her by girls of septs other than her own. After the

bath, she stands at the entrance to the house, and a Kāvuthiyachi (barber woman) sprinkles sea-water over her with a tuft of grass (*Cynodon Dactylon*). A cloth is thrown over her, and she is led into the house. The barber woman receives as her fee a cocoanut, some rice, and condiments. A tāli (marriage badge) is tied on the girl's neck by her prospective husband's sister if a husband has been selected for her, or by a woman of a sept other than her own. The girl must fast until the conclusion of the ceremony, and should remain indoors for seven days afterwards. At the time of ceremony, she receives presents of money at the rate of two vellis per family. The Arayan receives two vellis, a bundle of betel leaves, areca nuts, and tobacco.

Girls are married after puberty according to one of two forms of rite, called kōdi-udukkal (tying the cloth) and vīttil-kūdal. The former is resorted to by the more prosperous members of the community, and lasts over two days. On the first day, the bridegroom goes to the home of the bride, accompanied by his relations and friends, and sweets, betel leaves and areca nuts, etc., are given to them. They then take their departure, and return later in the day, accompanied by musicians, in procession. At the entrance to the bride's house they stand while someone calls out the names of the eleven Arayans of the caste, who, if they are present, come forward without a body-cloth or coat. Betel leaves and areca nuts are presented to the Arayans or their representatives, and afterwards to the Rājyakkar, or chief men of the village. The bridegroom then goes inside, conducted by two men belonging to the septs of the contracting parties, to the bride's room. The bridegroom sits down to a meal with nine or eleven young men in a line, or in the same room. On the second day,

the bride is brought to the pandal. Two persons are selected as representatives of the bridegroom and bride, and the representative of the former gives thirty-nine vellis to the representative of the latter. Some sweetened water is given to the bridegroom's relations. A woman who has been married according to the kōdi-udukkal rite ties a new cloth round the waist of the bride, after asking her if she is willing to marry the bridegroom, and obtaining the consent of those assembled. Sometimes a necklace, composed of twenty-one gold coins, is also tied on the bride's neck. At night, the bridal couple take their departure for the home of the bridegroom. In South Canara, the ceremonial is spread over three days, and varies from the above in some points of detail. The bridegroom goes in procession to the bride's house, accompanied by a Sangāyi or Mūnan (best or third man) belonging to a sept other than that of the bridal couple. The bride is seated in a room, with a lamp and a tray containing betel leaves, areca nuts, and flowers. The Sangāyi takes a female cloth in which some money is tied, and throws it on a rope within the room. On the third day, the bride puts on this cloth, and, seated within the pandal, receives presents.

The vīttil-kūdal marriage rite is completed in a single day. The bridegroom comes to the home of the bride, and goes into her room, conducted thither by two men belonging to the septs of the contracting couple. The newly-married couple may not leave the bride's house until the seventh day after the marriage ceremony, and the wife is not obliged to live at her husband's house.

There is yet another form of alliance called vechchirukkal, which is an informal union with the consent of the parents and the Arayans. It is recorded, in the

Gazetteer of Malabar, that "amongst Mukkuvas the vidāram marriage obtains, but for this no ceremony is performed. The vidāram wife is not taken to her husband's house, and her family pay no stridhanam. A vidāram marriage can at any time be completed, as it were, by the performance of the kalyānam ceremonies. Even if this be not done, however, a child by a vidāram wife has a claim to inherit to his father in South Malabar, if the latter recognises him by paying to the mother directly after her delivery a fee of three fanams called mukkapanam. A curious custom is that which prescribes that, if a girl be married after attaining puberty, she must remain for a period in the status of a vidāram wife, which may subsequently be raised by the performance of the regular kalyānam."

Divorce is easily effected by payment of a fine, the money being divided between the husband or wife as the case may be, the temple, the Arayans, and charity.

A pregnant woman has to go through a ceremony called puli or ney-kudi in the fifth or seventh month. A ripe cocoanut, which has lost its water, is selected, and heated over a fire. Oil is then expressed from it, and five or seven women smear the tongue and abdomen of the pregnant woman with it. A barber woman is present throughout the ceremony. The husband lets his hair grow until his wife has been delivered, and is shaved on the third day after the birth of the child. At the place where he sits for the operation, a cocoanut, betel leaves and areca nuts are placed. The cocoanut is broken in pieces by some one belonging to the same sept as the father of the child. Pollution is got rid of on this day by a barber woman sprinkling water at the houses of the Mukkuvans. A barber should also sprinkle water at the temple on the same day.

The dead are, as a rule, buried. Soon after death has taken place, the widow of the deceased purchases twenty-eight cubits of white cloth. A gold ring is put into the hand of the corpse, and given to the widow or her relations, to be returned to the relations of the dead man. The corpse is bathed in fresh water, decorated, and placed on a bier. The widow then approaches, and, with a cloth over her head, cuts her tāli off, and places it by the side of the corpse. Sometimes the tāli is cut off by a barber woman, if the widow has been married according to the kōdi-udukkal rite. In some places, the bier is kept in the custody of the barber, who brings it whenever it is required. In this case, the articles requisite for decorating the corpse, *e.g.*, sandal paste and flowers, are brought by the barber, and given to the son of the deceased. Some four or five women belonging to the Kadavar families are engaged for mourning. The corpse is carried to the burial-ground, where a barber tears a piece of cloth from the winding-sheet, and gives it to the son. The bearers anoint themselves, bathe in the sea, and, with wet cloths, go three times round the corpse, and put a bit of gold, flowers, and rice, in its nose. The relations then pour water over the corpse, which is lowered into the grave. Once more the bearers, and the son, bathe in the sea, and go three times round the grave. The son carries a pot of water, and, at the end of the third round, throws it down, so that it is broken. On their return home, the son and bearers are met by a barber woman, who sprinkles them with rice and water. Death pollution is observed for seven days, during which the son abstains from salt and tamarind. A barber woman sprinkles water over those under pollution. On the eighth, or sometimes the fourteenth day, the final death ceremony is performed. Nine or

eleven boys bathe in the sea, and offer food near it. They then come to the house of the deceased, and, with lamps on their heads, go round seven or nine small heaps of raw rice or paddy (unhusked rice), and place the lamps on the heaps. The eldest son is expected to abstain from shaving his head for six months or a year. At the end of this time, he is shaved on an auspicious day. The hair, plantains, and rice, are placed in a small new pot, which is thrown into the sea. After a bath, rice is spread on the floor of the house so as to resemble the figure of a man, over which a green cloth is thrown. At one end of the figure, a light in a measure is placed. Seven or nine heaps of rice or paddy are made, on which lights are put, and the son goes three times round, throwing rice at the north, south, east, and west corners. This brings the ceremonial to a close.

Mulaka (*Solanum xanthocarpum*).—A sept of Balija. The fruit of this plant is tied to the big toe of Brāhman corpses.

Mūli.—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a class of blacksmiths in Ganjam, and stone-cutters in Vizagapatam. It is said to be a sub-division of Lohāra. Mūli also occurs as an occupational sub-division of Savara.

Mūli Kurava.—A name for Kuravas in Travancore.

Mullangi (radish).—An exogamous sept of Kōmati.

Mullu (thorn).—A gōtra of Kurni. Mullu also occurs as a sub-division of Kurumba.

Multāni.—A territorial name, meaning a native of Multān in the Punjab. They are described, in the Mysore Census Report, 1901, as immigrant traders, found in the large towns, whose business consists chiefly of banking and money-lending.

Mundāla.—A sub-division of Holeya.

Mundapōtho.—Mundapōtho (mundo, head; potho, bury) is the name of a class of mendicants who wander about Ganjām, and frequent the streets of Jagannāth (Pūri). They try to arouse the sympathy of pilgrims by burying their head in the sand or dust, and exposing the rest of the body. They generally speak Telugu.

Mungaru (woman's skirt).—An exogamous sept of Kāpu.

Muni.—*See* Rāvulo.

Mūnillakkar (people of the three illams).—A section of Mukkuvans, which is divided into three illams.

Munnūti Gumpu.—Recorded, in the Kurnool Manual, as "a mixed caste, comprising the illegitimate descendants of Balijas, and the male children of dancing-girls." It is not a caste name, but an insulting name for those of mixed origin.

Munnūttān (men of the three hundred).—Recorded, at times of census, as a synonym of Vēlan, and sub-caste of Pānan, among the latter of whom Anjūttān (men of five hundred) also occurs. In the Gazetteer of Malabar, Munnūttān appears as a class of Mannāns, who are closely akin to the Vēlans. In Travancore, Munnutilkar is a name for Kumbakōnam Vellālas, who have settled there.

Mūppan.—Mūppan has been defined as "an elder, the headman of a class or business, one who presides over ploughmen and shepherds, etc. The word literally means an elder: mukkiradu, to grow old, and muppu, seniority." At recent times of census, Mūppan has been returned as a title by many classes, which include Alavan, Ambalakāran, Kudumi, Pallan, Paraiyan and Tandan in Travancore, Senaikkudaiyan, Sāliyan, Shānān, Sudarmān and Valaiyan. It has further been returned as a division of Konkana Sūdras in Travancore.

During my wanderings in the Malabar Wynād, I came across a gang of coolies, working on a planter's estate, who called themselves Mūppans. They were interesting owing to the frequent occurrence among them of a very simple type of finger-print impression (arches).

Mūppil (chief).—A sub-division of Nāyar.

Murikinādu.—Murikinādu or Murikināti is a territorial name, which occurs as a division of Telugu Brāhmans, and of various Telugu classes, *e.g.*, Kamsala, Māla, Mangala, Rāzu, and Tsākala.

Muriya.—A small class in Ganjam, who are engaged in making a preparation of fried rice (muri) and in cultivation.

Mūru Balayanōru (three-bangle people).—A sub-division of Kāppiliyan.

Musaliar.—An occupational term, denoting a Muhammadan priest, returned at times of census in the Tamil country.

Musāri.—A division of Malayālam Kammālans, whose occupation is that of brass and copper smiths. The equivalent Musarlu occurs among the Telugu Kamsalas.

Mūshika (rat).—A gōtra of Nagarālu. The rat is the vehicle of the Elephant God, Vignēsvara or Ganēsa.

Mushtiga.—An exogamous sept of the Gollas, who may not use the mushtiga tree (*Strychnos Nux-vomica*). It also occurs as a synonym of Jetti.

Mushti Golla.—A class of mendicants, usually of mixed extraction. Mushti means alms.

Mūssad.—For the following note on the Mūssads or Mūttatus of Travancore, I am indebted to Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar. They are known as Mūttatus or Mūssatus in Travancore and Cochin, and Potuvals (or

Poduvals) or Akapotuvals in North Malabar. The word Mūttatu means elder, and is generally taken to indicate a community, which is higher than the Ambalavāsi castes, as Ilayatu (or Elayad), or younger, denotes a sub-caste slightly lower than the Brāhmans. In early records, the word Mūpputayor, which has an identical meaning, is met with. Potuval means a common person, *i.e.*, the representative of a committee, and a Mūttatu's right to this name is from the fact that, in the absence of the Nambūtiri managers of a temple, he becomes their agent, and is invested with authority to exercise all their functions. The work of an Akapotuval always lies within the inner wall of the shrine, while that of the Purapotuval or Potuval proper lies outside. The castemen themselves prefer the name Sivadvija or Saivite Brāhman. A few families possess special titles, such as Nambi and Nambiyar. Their women are generally known as Manayammamar, mana meaning the house of a Brāhman. There are no divisions or septs among the Mūttatus.

The origin of the Mūttatus, and their place in Malabar society, are questions on which a good deal of discussion has been of late expended. In the Jātinirnaya, an old Sanskrit work on the castes of Kērala attributed to Sankarāchārya, it is said that the four kinds of Ambalavāsis, Tantri, Bharatabhattaraka, Agrima, and Slaghyavakku, are Brāhmans degraded in the Krita, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali ages, respectively, and that those who were so degraded in the Dvapara Yuga—the Agrimas or Mūttatus—and whose occupation is to cleanse the stone steps of shrines—are found in large numbers in Kērala. According to Kērala Mahatmya, another Sanskrit work on Malabar history and customs, these Mūttatus are also known as Sivadvijas, or

Brāhmans dedicated to the worship of Siva, occupying a lower position in Malabar society than that of the Brāhmans. One of them, disguised as a Nambūtiri, married a Nambūtiri's daughter, but his real status became known before the marriage was consummated, and the pair were degraded, and allotted a separate place in society. This tradition is not necessary to account for the present position of the Mūttatus in Kērala, as, all over India, worship of fixed images was viewed with disfavour even in the days of Manu. Worship in Saivite temples was not sought by Brāhmans, and was even considered as despiritualising on account of the divine displeasure which may be expected as the result of misfeasance. It was for a similar reason that the Nambiyans of even Vaishnavite temples on the east coast became degraded in society. The Illayatus and Mūttatus have been long known in Malabar as Nyūnas or castes slightly lower than the Brāhmans, and Avāntaras or castes intermediate between Brāhmans and Ambalavāsis. As, in subsequent days, the Brāhmans themselves undertook with impunity the priestly profession in Hindu temples, Saivite as well as Vaishnavite, the Mūttatus had to be content with a more lowly occupation, viz., that of guarding the temples and images. According to Suchindra Mahatmyam, eleven Brāhmans were ordered by Parasu Rāma to partake of the remnants of the food offered to Siva, and to bear the Saivite image in procession round the shrine on occasions of festivals; and, according to the Vaikam Sthalapurānam, three families of Sivadvijas were brought over by the same sage from eastern districts for service at that temple. Whatever may be said in regard to the antiquity or authenticity of many of these Sthalapurānams, corroborative evidence of the Brāhmanical origin of the Mūttatus

may be amply found in their manners and customs. A fresh colony of Sivadvijas is believed to have been invited to settle at Tiruvanchikkulam in Cranganore from Chidambaram by one of the Perumāls of Kērala, in connection with the establishment of Saivite temples there. They have preserved their original occupation faithfully enough down to the present day.

The houses of Mūttatus are known as illams and mattams, the former being the name of all Nambūtiri houses. They are generally built beside some well-known shrine, with which the inmates are professionally connected. The dress of both men and women resembles that of the Nambūtiri Brāhmans, the injunction to cover the whole of the body when they go out of doors being applicable also to the Manayammamar. Girls before marriage wear a ring and kuzal on the neck, and, on festive occasions, a palakka ring. The chuttu in the ears, and pozhutu tāli on the neck are worn only after marriage, the latter being the symbol which distinguishes married women from widows and maidens. Widows are prohibited from wearing any ornament except the chuttu. In food and drink the Mūttatus are quite like the Nambūtiris.

The Mūttatus are the custodians of the images, which they take in procession, and wash the stone steps leading to the inner sanctuary. They live by the naivedya or cooked food offering which they receive from the temple, and various other emoluments. It may be noted that one of the causes of their degradation was the partaking of this food, which Brāhmans took care not to do. The Mūttatus are generally well-read in Sanskrit, and study astrology, medicine, and sorcery. The social government of the Mūttatus rests wholly with the Nambūtiris, who enforce the smartavicharam or enquiry into a

suspected case of adultery, as in the case of a Nambūtiri woman. When Nambūtiri priests are not available, Mūttatus, if learned in the Vēdas, may be employed, but punyaham, or purification after pollution, can only be done by a Nambūtiri.

Like the Nambūtiris, the Mūttatus strictly observe the rule that only the eldest male member in a family can marry. The rest form casual connections with women of most of the Ambalavāsi classes. They are, like the Brāhmans, divided into exogamous septs or gōtras. A girl is married before or after puberty. Polygamy is not uncommon, though the number of wives is never more than four. Widows do not remarry. In their marriage ceremonies, the Mūttatus resemble the Nambūtiris, with some minor points of difference. They follow two sutras, those of Asvalayana and Baudhayana, the former being members of the Rig Vēda and the latter of the Yajur Vēda. The former omit a number of details, such as the panchamehani and dasamehani, which are observed by the latter. According to a territorial distinction, Mūssad girls of North Malabar cannot become the daughters-in-law of South Malabar families, but girls of South Malabar can become the daughters-in-law of North Malabar families.

The Mūttatus observe all the religious rites of the Nambūtiris. The rule is that the eldest son should be named after the paternal grandfather, the second after the maternal grandfather, and the third after that of the father. The upanāyana ceremony is celebrated between the ages of seven and eleven, and the Gāyatri hymn may only be repeated ten times thrice daily. In the funeral rites, the help of the Mārān called Chitikan (a corruption of Chaitika, meaning one who is connected with the funeral pyre) is sought. Pollution lasts only ten days.

The Mūttatus stand above all sections of the Ambalavāsi group, and below every recognised section of the Brāhman and Kshatriya communities, with whom they do not hold commensal relations in any part of Kērala. They are thus on a par with the Illayatus, but the latter have their own hierarchy, and lead a social life almost independent of the Brāhmans. The Mūttatus seek their help and advice in all important matters. The Mūttatus are, however, privileged to take their food within the nālampalam (temple courts), and the leaf-plates are afterwards removed by temple servants. The Ambalavāsis do not possess a right of this kind. At Suchindram, the Nambūtiri by whom the chief image is served is not privileged to give prāsada (remains of offerings) to any worshipper, this privilege being confined to the Mūttatus engaged to serve the minor deities of the shrine. The washing of the stone steps leading to the inner sanctuary, the mandapa, kitchen, feeding rooms, and bali stones, both inside and outside the shrine, are done by Mūttatus at temples with which they are connected. All Ambalavāsis freely receive food from Mūttatus.

It is further noted, in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "there is a pithy saying in Malayālam, according to which the Mūthads are to be regarded as the highest of Ambalavāsis, and the Elayads as the lowest of Brāhmans. Considerable difference of opinion exists as to the exact social status of Mūthads. For, while some hold that they are to be regarded as degraded Brāhmans, others maintain that they are only the highest class of Ambalavāsis. In the opinion, however, of the most learned Vydīkan who was consulted on the subject, the Mūthads are to be classed as degraded Brāhmans. They are supposed to have suffered social degradation by their having tattooed their bodies with figures

representing the weapons of the god Siva, and partaking of the offerings made to that god."

A correspondent, who has made enquiry into caste questions in Malabar, writes to me as follows. There are several ways of spelling the name, *e.g.*, Mūssu, Mūssad, and Mūttatu. Some people tried to discriminate between these, but I could not work out any distinctions. In practice, I think, all the classes noted below are called by either name indifferently, and most commonly Mūssad. There are several classes, viz. :—

(1) Brāhman or quasi-Brāhman.

(*a*) *Ashtavaidyanmar*, or eight physicians, are eight families of hereditary physicians. They are called Jātimātrakaras (barely caste people), and it is supposed that they are Nambūdiris slightly degraded by the necessity they may, as surgeons, be under of shedding blood. Most of them are called Mūssad, but one at least is called Nambi.

(*b*) *Urili Parisha Mūssad*, or assembly in the village Mūssad, who are said to be degraded because they accepted gifts of land from Parasu Rāma, and agreed to take on themselves the sin he had contracted by slaying the Kshetriyas. This class, as a whole, is called Sapta or Saptagrastan.

(2) Ambalavāsi.

(*c*) *Mūssad or Mūttatu.*—They appear to be identical with the Agapothuvals, or inside Pothuvals, as distinguished from the Pura, or outside Pothuvals, in North Malabar. They are said to be the descendants of a Sivadvija man and pure Brāhman girl. According to another account, they lost caste because they ate rice offered to Siva, which is prohibited by one of the anāchārams, or rules of conduct peculiar to Kērala. They

perform various duties in temples, and escort the idol when it is carried in procession on an arrangement called tadambu, which is like an inverted shield with a shelf across it, on which the idol is placed. They wear the pūnūl, or sacred thread.

(*d*) *Karuga Mūssad.*—So called from the karuga grass (*Cynodon Dactylon*), which is used in ceremonies. Their exact position is disputed. They wear the sacred thread (*cf.* Karuga Nambūdiris in North Malabar), who cook rice for the srādh (memorial ceremony) of Sūdras.

(*e*) *Tiruvalayanath or Kōvil* (*temple*) *Mūssad.*—They also wear the sacred thread, but perform pūja in Bhadrakāli temples, incidents of which are the shedding of blood and use of liquor. They seem to be almost identical with the caste called elsewhere Adigal or Pidāran, but, I think, Adigals are a little higher, and do not touch liquor, while Pidārans are divided into two classes, the lower of which does not wear the thread or perform the actual pūja, but only attends to various matters subsidiary thereto.

In an account of the annual ceremony at the Pishāri temple near Quilandy in Malabar in honour of Bhagavati, Mr. F. Fawcett informs us * that the Mūssad priests repeat mantrams (prayers) over the goats for an hour as a preliminary to the sacrifice. Then the chief priest, with a chopper-like sword, decapitates the goats, and sacrifices several cocks. The Mūssads cook some of the flesh of the goats, and one or two of the cocks with rice. This rice, when cooked, is taken to the kāvu (grove) to the north of the temple, and there the Mūssads again ply their mantrams.

Mūsu Kamma.—The name of a special ear orna-



MŪSU KAMMA WOMAN.

In the Salem District Manual, Musuku is recorded as a sub-division of this caste.

Mutalpattukar.—A synonym of Tandan in Travancore, indicating those who received an allowance for the assistance they were called on to render to carpenters.

Mutrācha.—Mutrācha appears, in published records, in a variety of forms, such as Muttarācha, Muttirājulu, Muttarāsan, and Mutrātcha. The caste is known by one of these names in the Telugu country, and in the Tamil country as Muttiriyan or Pālaiyakkāran.

Concerning the Mutrāchas, Mr. H. A. Stuart writes as follows.* "This is a Telugu caste most numerous in the Kistna, Nellore, Cuddapah, and North Arcot districts. The Mutrāchas were employed by the Vijayanagar kings to defend the frontiers of their dominions, and were honoured with the title of pāligars (*cf.* Pālaiyakkāran). The word Mutrācha is derived from the Dravidian roots mudi, old, and rācha, a king; but another derivation is from Mutu Rāja, a sovereign of some part of the Telugu country. They eat flesh, and drink liquor. Their titles are Dora and Naidu." Mr. Stuart writes further † that in the North Arcot district they are "most numerous in the Chendragiri tāluk, but found all over the district in the person of the village taliāri or watchman, for which reason it is often called the taliāri caste. They proudly call themselves pāligars, and in Chendragiri doralu or lords, because several of the Chittoor pālaiyams (villages governed by pāligars) were in possession of members of their caste. They seem to have entered the country in the time of the Vijayanagar kings, and to have been appointed as its kāvilgars (watchmen). The caste is usually esteemed by others as a low one. Most of its

* Madras Census Report, 1891. † Manual of the North Arcot district.

members are poor, even when they have left the profession of taliāri, and taken to agriculture. They eat in the houses of most other castes, and are not trammelled by many restrictions. In Chendragiri they rarely marry, but form connections with women of their caste, which are often permanent, though not sanctioned by the marriage ceremony, and the offspring of such associations are regarded as legitimate."

In the Nellore Manual, the Mutrāchas are summed up as being hunters, fishermen, bearers, palanquin-bearers, and hereditary watchmen in the villages. At times of census, Mutrācha or Mutarāsan has been recorded as a sub-division of Ūrāli, and a title of Ambalakkāran. Muttiriyan, which is simply a Tamil form of Mutrācha, appears as a title and sub-division of Ambalakkāran (*q.v.*). Further, Tolagari is recorded as a sub-division of Mutrācha. The Tolagaris are stated* to be a small cultivating caste, who were formerly hunters, like the Pālayakkārans. Most of the Mutrāchas are engaged in agriculture. At Pāniyam, in the Kurnool district, I found some employed in collecting winged white-ants (*Termites*), which they sun-dry, and store in large pots as an article of food. They are said to make use of some special powder as a means of attracting the insects, in catching which they are very expert.

In some places, the relations between the Mutrāchas and Gollas, both of which castes belong to the left-hand section, are strained. On occasions of marriage among the Mādigas, some pān-supāri (betel leaves and areca nuts) is set apart for the Mutrāchas, as a mark of respect.

In consequence of the fact that some Mutrāchas have been petty chieftains, they claim to be Kshatriyas, and

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* Manual of the North Arcot district.

to be descended from Yayāthi of the Mahābaratha. According to the legend, Dēvayāna, the daughter of Sukracharya, the priest of the Daityas (demons and giants), went to a well with Charmanishta, the daughter of the Daitya king. A quarrel arose between them, and Charmanishta pushed Dēvayāna into a dry well, from which she was rescued by king Yayāthi. Sukracharya complained to the Daitya king, who made his daughter become a servant to Yayāthi's wife, Dēvayāna. By her marriage Dēvayāna bore two sons. Subsequently, Yayāthi became enamoured of Charmanishta, by whom he had an illegitimate son. Hearing of this, Sukracharya cursed Yayāthi that he should be subject to old age and infirmity. This curse he asked his children to take on themselves, but all refused except his illegitimate child Puru. He accordingly cursed his legitimate sons, that they should only rule over barren land overrun by Kirātas. One of them, Durvasa by name, had seven children, who were specially favoured by the goddess Ankamma. After a time, however, they were persuaded to worship Mahēswara or Vīrabhadra instead of Ankamma. This made the goddess angry, and she caused all flower gardens to disappear, except her own. Flowers being necessary for the purpose of worship, the perverts stole them from Ankamma's garden, and were caught in the act by the goddess. As a punishment for their sin, they had to lose their lives by killing themselves on a stake. One of the seven sons had a child named Rāvidēvirāju, which was thrown into a well as soon as it was born. The Nāga Kannikas of the nether regions rescued the infant, and tended it with care. One day, while Ankamma was traversing the Nāga lōkam (country), she heard a child crying, and sent her vehicle, a jackal (nakka), to bring the child, which,

however, would not allow the animal to take it. The goddess accordingly herself carried it off. The child grew up under her care, and eventually had three sons, named Karnam Rāju, Gangi Rāju, and Bhūpathi Rāju, from whom the Mutrāchas are descended. In return for the goddess protecting and bringing up the child, she is regarded as the special tutelary deity of the caste.

There is a saying current among the Mutrāchas that the Mutrācha caste is as good as a pearl, but became degraded as its members began to catch fish. According to a legend, the Mutrāchas, being Kshatriyas, wore the sacred thread. Some of them, on their way home after a hunting expedition, halted by a pond, and were tempted by the enormous number of fish therein to fish for them, using their sacred threads as lines. They were seen by some Brāhmans while thus engaged, and their degradation followed.

In the Telugu country, two divisions, called Paligiri and Oruganti, are recognised by the Mutrāchas, who further have exogamous septs or intipērulu, of which the following are examples:—

Āvula, cow.
Arigala, a dish carried in processions.
Busi, dirt.
Ella, boundary.
Guvvala, doves.
Indla, house.
Īga, fly.
Koppula, hair-knot.
Katāri, dagger.
Marri, *Ficus bengalensis*.
Nakka, jackal.
Puli, tiger.
Talāri, watchman.
Tōta, garden.
Uyyala, a swing.
Thumu, iron measure for measuring grain.

During the first menstrual seclusion of a girl, she may not have her meals served on a metal plate, but uses an earthern cup, which is eventually thrown away.

When she reaches puberty, a girl does up her hair in a knot called koppu.

In the case of confinement, pollution ends on the tenth day. But, if a woman loses her infant, especially a first-born, the pollution period is shortened, and, at every subsequent time of delivery, the woman bathes on the seventh or ninth day. Every woman who visits her on the bathing day brings a pot of warm water, and pours it over her head.

Mūttāl (substitute).—A sub-division of Mārān.

Mūttān.—In the Madras Census Report, 1901, the Mūttāns are summed up as "a trading caste in Malabar. The better educated members of it have begun to claim a higher social status than that usually accorded them. Formerly they claimed to be Nāyars, but recently they have gone further, and, in the census schedules, some of them returned themselves as Vaisyas, and added the Vaisya title Gupta to their names. They do not, however, wear the sacred thread, or perform any Vēdic rites, and Nāyars consider themselves polluted by their touch."

It is recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, under the conjoint heading Mūttān and Tarakan, that "these two are allied castes, but the latter would consider it a disgrace to acknowledge any affinity with the former. Tarakan literally means a broker. Dr. Gundert says that these were originally warehouse-keepers at Pālghat. Mūttān is probably from Mūttavan, an elder. Tarakans have returned Mūttān as a sub-division, and *vice versâ*, and both appear as sub-divisions of Nāyar. We have in our schedules instances of persons who have returned their caste as Tarakan, but with their names Krishna Mūttān (male) and Lakshmi Chettichiār (female). A Mūttān may, in course of time,

become a Tarakan, and then a Nāyar. Both these castes follow closely the customs and manners of Nāyars, but there are some differences. I have not, however, been able to get at the real state of affairs, as the members of the caste are very reticent on the subject, and simply assert that they are in all respects the same as Nāyars. One difference is that a Brāhmani does not sing at their tāli-kettu marriages. Again, instead of having a Mārayān, Attikurissi, or Elayad as their priest, they employ a man of their own caste, called Chōrattōn. This man assists at their funeral ceremonies, and purifies them at the end of pollution, just as the Attikurissi does for Nāyars. Kāli temples seem to be specially affected by this caste, and these Chōrattōns are also priests in these temples. The Mūttān and Tarakan castes are practically confined to Pālghat and Walluvanād tāluks."

In a note on some castes in Malabar which are most likely of foreign origin, it is stated, in the Gazetteer of Malabar, that "this is certainly true of the Mūttāns, who are found only in the Palghat taluk and in the parts of Walavanad bordering on it, a part of the country where there is a large admixture of Tamils in the population. They are now advancing a claim to be Vaisyas, and some of them have adopted the title Gupta which is proper to that caste, while a few have the title Ezhutacchan. Some Mūttāns in Palghat are called Mānnādiars, a title also apparently borne by some Taragans. The Mūttāns follow makkattāyam (inheritance from father to son), and do not enter into the loose connections known as sambandhams; their women are called Chettichiars, clearly indicating their eastern origin; and their period of pollution is ten days, according to which test they would rank as a high caste. On

the other hand, they may eat meat and drink liquor. Their purificatory ceremonies are performed by a class known as Chōrttavans (literally, sprinklers), who are said to be identical with Kulangara Nāyars, and not by Attikurrissi Nāyars as in the case with Nambūdris, Ambalavāsis, and Nāyars. There is considerable antagonism between the Palghat and Walavanad sections of the caste. Another caste of traders, which has now been practically incorporated in the Nāyar body, is the class known as Taragans (literally, brokers) found in Palghat and Walavanad, some of whom have considerable wealth and high social position. The Taragans of Angadippuram and the surrounding neighbourhood claim to be immigrants from Travancore, and to be descendants of Ettuvittil Pillamar of Quilon, who are high caste Nāyars. They can marry Kiriyattil women, and their women occasionally have sambandham with Sāmantan Rājas. The Palghat Taragans on the other hand can marry only in their caste."

Muttasāri.—Recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as a name by which Kammālans are addressed.

Muttiriyan.—*See* Mutrācha.

Mutyāla (pearl).—An exogamous sept, and name of a sub-division of Balijas who deal in pearls. The Ambalakārans say that they were born of the sweat (muttu, a pearl or bead of perspiration) of Paramasiva.

Muvvāri.—Recorded * as "a North Malabar caste of domestic servants under the Embrāntiri Brāhmans. Their customs resemble those of the Nāyars, but the Elayads and the Mārayāns will not serve them."

* Madras Census Report, 1901.

Myāsa.—Myāsa, meaning grass-land or forest, is one of the two main divisions, Ūrū (village) and Myāsa, of the Bēdars and Bōyas. Among the Myāsa Bēdars, the rite of circumcision is practiced, and is said to be the survival of a custom which originated when they were included in the army of Haidar Āli.

Nādān.—Nādān, meaning ruler of a country or village, or one who lives in the country, is a title of the Shānāns, who, further, call themselves Nādāns in preference to Shānāns.

Nādava.—" This, " Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,* " is a caste of Canarese farmers found only in South Canara. The Nādavas have returned four sub-divisions, one of which is Bant, and two of the other three are sub-divisions of Bants, the most important being Masādi. In the case of 33,212 individuals, Nādava has been returned as sub-division also. I have no information regarding the caste, but they seem to be closely allied to the Bant caste, of which Nādava is one of the sub-divisions." The name Nādava or Nādavaru means people of the nādu or country. It is one of the sub-divisions of the Bants.

Nāga (cobra : *Naia tripudians*).—Nāg, Nāga, Nāgasa, or Nāgēswara, occurs in the name of a sept or gōtra of various classes in Ganjam and Vizagapatam, *e.g.*, Aiyarakulu, Bhondāri, Bhumia, Bottada, Dōmb, Gadaba, Konda Dora, Mēdara, Mūka Dora, Nagarālu, Omanaito, Poroja, Rōna, and Sāmantiya. Members of the Nāgabonso sept of Odiya claim to be descendants of Nāgamuni,

* Madras Census Report, 1891.

the serpent rishi. Nāga is further a gōtra or sept of Kurnis and Toreyas, of whom the latter, at their weddings, worship at 'ant' (*Termites*) hills, which are often the home of cobras. It is also a sub-division of Gāzula Kāpus and Koppala Velamas. Nāgavadam (cobra's hood) is the name of a sub-division of the Pallis, who wear an ornament, called nāgavadam, shaped like a cobra's head, in the dilated lobes of the ears. Among the Vīramushtis there is a sept named Nāga Mallika (*Rhinacanthus communis*), the roots of which shrub are believed to be an antidote to the bite of poisonous snakes. The flowers of *Couroupita guianensis*, which has been introduced as a garden tree in Southern India, are known as nāga linga pu, from the staminal portion of the flower which curves over the ovary being likened to a cobra's hood, and the ovary to a lingam.

Nāgali (plough).—An exogamous sept of Kāpu.

Nāgalika (of the plough).—A name for Lingayats engaged in cultivation.

Nagarālu.—The Nagarālu are a cultivating caste in Vizagapatam, concerning whom it is recorded * that "Nagarālu means the dwellers in a nagaram or city, and apparently this caste was originally a section of the Kāpus, which took to town life, and separated itself off from the parent stock. They say their original occupation was medicine, and a number of them are still physicians and druggists, though the greater part are agriculturists."

For the following note, I am indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. Viziarām Rāz, the friend of Bussy, conferred mokhāsas (grants of land) on some of the most important members of the caste, whose descendants

* Madras Census Report, 1901.

are to be found in various places. The caste is divided into three sections or gōtras, viz., Nāgēsvara (cobra), Kūrmēsa (tortoise), and Vignēsvara or Mūshika (rat). The rat is the vehicle of the elephant god Ganēsa or Vignēsvara. It is further divided into exogamous septs or intipērulu, such as sampathi (riches), chakravarthi (king or ruler), majji, etc.

The mēnarikam system, according to which a man should marry his maternal uncle's daughter, is in force. Girls are usually married before puberty, and a Brāhman officiates at marriages. The marriage of widows and divorce are not permitted.

The dead are burnt, and the chinna (little) and pedda rōzu (big day) death ceremonies, whereat a Brāhman officiates, are celebrated.

Some members of the caste have acquired a great reputation as medicine-men and druggists.

The usual caste title is Pāthrulu, indicating those who are fit to receive a gift.

Nagartha.—Nagarata, Nagarattar, or Nagarakulam is returned, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a sub-caste of Chetti. In the Census Report, 1891, it is recorded that the Nagarattu "hail from Kānchipuram (Conjeeveram), where, it is said, a thousand families of this caste formerly lived. Their name (nagaram, a city) refers to their original home. They wear the sacred thread, and worship both Vishnu and Siva. They take neither flesh nor alcohol. As they maintain that they are true Vaisyas, they closely imitate the Brāhmanical ceremonies of marriage and death. This sub-division has a dancing-girl and a servant attached to it, whose duties are to dance, and to do miscellaneous work during marriages. The caste servant is called Jātipillai (child of the caste).

Concerning the Nagarthas, who are settled in the Mysore Province, I gather * that "the account locally obtained connects them with the Gānigas, and the two castes are said to have been co-emigrants to Bangalore, where one Mallarāje Ars made headmen of the principal members of the two castes, and exempted them from the house-tax. Certain gōtras are said to be common to both castes, but they never eat together or intermarry. Both call themselves Dharmasivachar Vaisyas, and the feuds between them are said to have often culminated in much unpleasantness. The Nagarthas are principally found in towns and large trade centres. Some are worshippers of Vishnu, and others of Siva. Of the latter, some wear the linga. They are dealers in bullion, cloth, cotton, drugs, and grain. A curious mode of carrying the dead among the Nāmadāri or Vaishnavite Nagarthas is that the dead body is rolled up in a blanket, instead of a bier or vimāna as among others. These cremate their dead, whereas the others bury them. Marriage must be performed before a girl reaches puberty, and widows are not allowed to remarry. Polygamy is allowed, and divorce can be for adultery alone. It is recorded by Mr. L. Rice † that "cases sometimes occur of a Sivāchar marrying a Nāmadāri woman, and, when this happens, her tongue is burned with the linga, after which she forsakes her parents' house and religion. It is stated that the Sivāchar Nagarthas never give their daughters in marriage to the Nāmadāri sect." Among the gōtras returned by the Nagarthas are Kasyapa, Chandramaulēswara, and Chōlēndra.

Nāga-srēni.—A fanciful name, meaning those who live in the Nāga street, used as a caste name by the Patramēla dancing-girl caste.

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* Mysore Census Reports, 1891, 1901. † Mysore and Coorg Gazetteer.

Nāgavāsulu.—The Nāgavāsulu are described, in the Vizagapatam Manual, as "cultivators in the Vizagapatam district. Women who have not entered into matrimony earn money by prostitution, and acting as dancers at feasts. Some of the caste lead a bad life, and are excluded from the body of the caste." In the Madras Census Report, 1891, it is stated that "Nāgavāsamu means a company of dancing-girls, and the sons of women of this profession frequently call themselves Nāgavāsulu. The bulk of the caste in Vizagapatam, however, are said to be respectable farmers." It is noted, in the Census Report, 1901, that "most of the Nāgavāsulu are cultivators, but some of the women are prostitutes by profession, and outsiders are consequently admitted to the caste. Their title is Naidu."

Nāgellu (plough).—An exogamous sept of Bōya.

Nagna (naked).—A name for Sanyāsis, who go about naked.

Naidu.—Naidu or Nāyudu is a title, returned at times of census by many Telugu classes, *e.g.*, Balija, Bestha, Bōya, Ēkari, Gavara, Golla, Kālingi, Kāpu, Mutrācha, and Velama. A Tamilian, when speaking of a Telugu person bearing this title, would call him Naicker or Naickan instead of Naidu.

Naik.—The word Naik (Nāyaka, a leader or chief) is used, by the older writers on Southern India, in several senses, of which the following examples, given by Yule and Burnell,* may be cited :—

(*a*) Native captain or headman. "Il s'appelle Naique, qui signifie Capitaine." Barretto, Rel du Prov de Malabar.

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* Hobson-Jobson.

(*b*) A title of honour among Hindus in the Deccan. "The kings of Deccan also have a custome when they will honour a man or recompence their service done, and rayse him to dignitie and honour. They give him the title of Naygue".—*Linschoten*.

(*c*) The general name of the kings of Vijayanagara, and of the Lords of Madura and other places. "Il y a plusieurs Naiques au Sud de Saint Thomé, qui sont Souverains: Le Naigue de Madure on est un".—*Thevenot*.

Naik, Naickan, Naicker, Nāyak or Nāyakkan has been returned, at recent times of census, by the Tamil Pallis, Irulas, and Vēdans, and also by various Telugu and Canarese classes, *e.g.* :—

Telugu—Balija, Bōya, Ēkari, Golla, Kavarai, Muttiriyan, Oddē, Tottiyan, and Uppiliyan.

Canarese—Bēdar, Cheptēgāra, Chārodi, Kannadiyan, Servēgāra, Sīviyar, and Toreya. Some Jēn Kurumbas (a jungle folk) in the Wynād are also locally known as Naikers.

Tulu—The Mogērs, in some parts of South Canara, prefer the title Naiker to the ordinary caste title Marakālēru, and some Bants have the same title.

The headman among the Lambādis or Brinjāris is called Naik. Naicker further occurs as a hereditary title in some Brāhman families. I have, for example, heard of a Dēsastha Brāhman bearing the name Nyna Naicker.

Naik, Naiko, or Nāyako appears as the title of various Oriya classes, *e.g.*, Alia, Aruva, Bagata, Gaudo, Jātapu, Odia, Pentiya, Rōna, and Tēli. It is noted by Mr. S. P. Rice that "the Uriya Korono, or head of the village, appropriates to himself as his caste distinction the title Potonaiko signifying the Naik or head of the town."

The name Nāyar or Nair is, it may be noted, akin to Naik and Naidu, and signifies a leader or soldier.* In this connection, Mr. Lewis Moore writes † that "almost every page of Mr. Sewell's interesting book on Vijayanagar ‡ bears testimony to the close connection between Vijayanagar and the west coast. It is remarkable that Colonel (afterwards Sir Thomas) Munro, in the memorandum written by him in 1802 on the poligars (feudal chiefs) of the Ceded Districts, when dealing with the cases of a number of poligars who were direct descendants of men who had been chiefs under the kings of Vijayanagar, calls them throughout his report Naigue or Nair, using the two names as if they were identical."§

It is noted by Mr. Talboys Wheeler ‖ that, in the city of Madras in former days, "police duties were entrusted to a Hindu official, known as the Pedda Naik or 'elder chief,' who kept a staff of peons, and was bound to make good all stolen articles that were not recovered."

In the South Canara district, the name Naikini (Naik females) is taken by temple dancing-girls.

Nainar.—*See* Nāyinar.

Nakāsh.—A name, denoting exquisite workmanship, by which Rāchevars or Chitrakāras are known in some places.

Nakkala.—Nakkala or Nakka, meaning jackal, has been recorded as an exogamous sept of Bōya, Gudala, Golla, and Mutrācha. The jackal is the vehicle of the goddess Ankamma, who is the tutelary deity of the

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* Wigram: Malabar Law and Customs. † *Ibid.*, 3rd ed., 1905.

‡ A Forgotten Empire, Vijayanagar.

§ Fifth Report of the Committee on the affairs of the East India Company. Reprint, Higginbotham, Madras.

‖ College History of India, 1888.



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Mutrāchas. The name occurs further as a name for the Kuruvikkārans, who manufacture spurious jackal horns as charms.

Nāli (bamboo tube).—An exogamous sept of Kuruba.

Nālillakkar (people of the four illams).—A section of Mukkuvans, which is divided into four illams.

Nalke.—The Nalkes or Nalakēyavas are described by Mr. H. A. Stuart * as "a caste of mat, basket, and umbrella makers, who furnish the devil-dancers, who play such an important part in the worship of the Tulu people. They have the usual Tulu exogamous sub-divisions or balis. They are generally held to be Holeyas or Pariahs. In Canarese they are called Pānāras."

"Every village in Canara," Mr. Stuart writes further,† "has its Bhūtasthānam or demon temple, in which the officiating priest or pūjāri is usually a man of the Billava caste, and shrines innumerable are scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land for the propitiation of the malevolent spirits of deceased celebrities, who, in their lifetime, had acquired a more than usual local reputation whether for good or evil, or had met with a sudden or violent death. In addition to these there are demons of the jungle and demons of the waste, demons who guard the village boundaries, and demons whose only apparent vocation is that of playing tricks, such as throwing stones on houses, and causing mischief generally. The demons who guard the village boundaries seem to be the only ones who are credited with even indirectly exercising a useful function. The others merely inspire terror by causing sickness and misfortune,

* Manual of the South Canara district. † *Ibid.*

and have to be propitiated by offerings, which often involve the shedding of blood, that of a fowl being most common. There are also family Bhūtas, and in every non-Brāhman house a room, or sometimes only a corner, is set apart for the Bhūta, and called the Bhūta-kotya. The Bhūtasthānam is generally a small, plain structure, 4 or 5 yards deep by 2 or 3 yards wide, with a door at one end covered by a portico supported on two pillars. The roof is of thatch, and the building is without windows. In front of it there are usually three or four T-shaped pillars. Flowers are placed, and cocoanuts broken on them at ceremonies. The temples of the more popular Bhūtas are often substantial buildings of considerable size. Inside the Bhutasthānam there are usually a number of images, roughly made in brass, in human shape, or resembling animals, such as pigs, tigers, fowls, etc. These are brought out and worshipped as symbols of the Bhūtas on various ceremonial occasions.* A peculiar small goglet or vase, made of bell-metal, into which from time to time water is poured, is kept before the Bhūtas, and, on special occasions, kepula (*Ixora coccinea*) flowers, and lights are placed before them. In the larger sthānas a sword is always kept near the Bhūta, to be held by the officiating priest when he stands possessed and trembling with excitement before the people assembled for worship.† A bell or gong is also found in all Bhūtasthānams. In the case of Bhūtas connected with temples, there is a place set apart for them, called a gudi. The Bhūtasthānam of the Baiderlu is called a garudi.

"The names of the Bhūtas are legion. One of the most dreaded is named Kalkuti. Two others commonly

* M. J. Walhouse. Journ. Anthrop. Inst., V, 1876.

† Devil Worship of the Tuluvas, Ind. Ant., XXIII, 1894.



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worshipped by the Bants and the Billavas are Kōti Baidya and Chennaya Baidya, who always have Billava pūjāris. These two Bhūtas are the departed spirits of two Billava heroes. The spirit of Kujumba Kānje, a Bant of renown, belongs to this class of Bhūtas. Amongst the most well known of the others, may be mentioned Kodamanitāya and Mundaltāya, and the jungle demons Hakkerlu and Brahmērlu. The Holeyas worship a Bhūta of their own, who is not recognised by any other class of the people. He goes by the name of Kumberlu, and the place where he is said to reside is called Kumberlu-kotya. Very often a stone of any shape, or a small plank is placed on the ground, or fixed in a wall, and the name of a Bhūta given to it. Other representations of Bhūtas are in the shape of an ox (Mahīsandāya), a horse (Jārāndāya), a pig (Panjurli), or a giant (Baiderlu).

"The Bhūta worship of South Canara is of four kinds, viz., kōla, bandi, nēma, and agelu-tambila. Kōla, or devil dancing, is offered to the Bhūtas in the sthāna of the village in which they are supposed to reside. The Sudras of the village, and of those adjacent to it, assemble near the sthāna, and witness the kōla ceremony in public, sharing the cost of it by subscriptions raised among all the Sudra families in the village in which the ceremony is held. Bandi is the same as kōla, with the addition of dragging about a clumsy kind of car, on which the Pompada priest representing the Bhūta is seated. Nēma is a private ceremony in honour of the Bhūtas, held in the house of anyone who is so inclined. It is performed once in ten, fifteen, or twenty years by well-to-do Billavas or Bants. The expenses of the nēma amount to about Rs. 600 or Rs. 700, and are borne by the master of the house in which the nēma takes place.

During the nēma, the Bhūtas, *i.e.*, the things representing them, are brought from the sthāna to the house of the man giving the feast, and remain there till it is over. Agelu-tambila is a kind of worship offered only to the Baiderlu, and that annually by the Billavas only. It will be seen that kōla, bandi, and nēma are applicable to all the Bhūtas, including the Baiderlu, but that the agelu-tambila is applicable only to the Baiderlu."

The following account of Canara devil-dancers and exorcists is given in Mr. Lavie's Manuscript History of Canara. "It is their duty to carry a beautiful sword with a handsomely curved handle, and polished blade of the finest steel. These they shake and flourish about in all directions, jumping, dancing, and trembling in a most frightful manner. Their hair is loose and flowing, and, by their inflamed eyes and general appearance, I should suppose that they are prepared for the occasion by intoxicating liquids or drugs . . . . Their power as exorcists is exercised on any person supposed to be possessed with the devil. I have passed by a house in which an exorcist has been exercising his powers. He began with groans, sighs, and mutterings, and broke forth into low mournings. Afterwards he raised his voice, and uttered with rapidity and in a peculiar tone of voice certain mantrams or charms, all the while trembling violently, and moving his body backwards and forwards." The performance (of devil dances) always takes place at night, commencing about nine o'clock. At first the pūjāri, with the Bhūta sword and bell in his hands, whirls round and round, imitating the supposed mien and gestures of the demon. But he does not aspire to full possession; that is reserved for a Pombada or a Nalke, a man of the lowest class, who comes forward when the Billava pūjāri has exhibited himself for about



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half an hour. He is naked save for a waist-band, his face is painted with ochre, and he wears a sort of arch made of cocoanut leaves, and a metal mask. After pacing up and down slowly for some time, he gradually works himself up to a pitch of hysterical frenzy, while the tom-toms are beaten furiously, and the spectators join in raising a long, monotonous howling cry, with a peculiar vibration. At length he stops, and every one is addressed according to his rank; if the Pombada offends a rich Bānt by omitting any of his numerous titles, he is made to suffer for it. Matters regarding which there is any dispute are then submitted for the decision of the Bhūta, and his award is generally accepted. Either at this stage or earlier, the demon is fed, rice and food being offered to the Pombada, while, if the Bhūta is of low degree, flesh and arrack (liquor) are also presented. These festivals last for several nights, and Dr. Burnell states that the devil-dancer receives a fee of eight rupees for his frantic labours."

Of the three devil-dancing castes found in South Canara (Nalke, Parava, and Pompada), the Nalkes are apparently the lowest. Even a Koraga considers a Nalke or a Parava inferior to him. It is said that, when a Parava meets a Koraga, he is expected to raise his hand to his forehead. This practice does not, however, seem to be observed at the present day. The Nalkes, though living amidst castes which follow the aliya-santāna law of inheritance (in the female line), follow the makkalakattu law of inheritance from father to son. The caste has numerous balis (septs), which are evidently borrowed from the Bants and Billavas. As examples of these, Salannaya, Bangerannaya, Kundar-annaya, and Uppenannayya may be cited. The Nalkes

have a headman called Gurikāra, who settles disputes and other matters affecting the community, and acts as the priest at marriages, death ceremonies, and other ceremonials.

Girls are married after puberty, and a woman may marry any number of times. The marriage ceremony is concluded in a single day. The contracting couple are seated on planks, and the Gurikāra throws coloured rice over their heads, and ties a turmeric-dyed string with beads strung on it round their necks. Those assembled then throw rice over them, their hands are joined by the Gurikāra or their fathers, and the dhare water is poured thereon.

The dead are either buried or cremated. After burial or cremation, a mound (dhupe) is, as among other castes in Canara, made over the spot. Round it, four posts are stuck in the ground, and decorated so as to resemble a small car (*cf.* Billava). The final death ceremonies (uttarakriya) are generally performed on the fifth or seventh day. On this day, cooked food is offered to the deceased by placing it near the dhupe, or on the spot where he breathed his last. This is followed by a feast. If the ceremony is not performed on one of the recognised days, the permission of some Bants or Billavas must be obtained before it can be carried out.

All castes in South Canara have great faith in Bhūtas, and, when any calamity or misfortune overtakes a family, the Bhūtas must be propitiated. The worship of Bhūtas is a mixture of ancestor and devil propitiation. In the Bhūta cult, the most important personage is Brahmeru, to whom the other Bhūtas are subordinate. Owing to the influence of Brāhman Tantris, Brahmeru is regarded as another name for Brahma, and the various



JUMADI BHŪTA.

Bhūtas are regarded as ganas or attendants on Siva. Brāhmanical influence is clearly to be traced in the various Bhūta songs, and all Bhūtas are in some manner connected with Siva and Parvati.

Whenever people want to propitiate the Bhūtas, a Nalke or Parava is engaged. In some places, the Nalke disguises himself as any Bhūta, but, where Paravas are also to be found, the Nalke may not dress up as the Baiderkulu, Kodamanitaya, or Rakteswari. The propitiation of the Bhūta takes the form of a ceremony called Kōla, Nēma, or Agelu Tambila. Of these, Kōla is a periodical ceremony, in which various castes take part, and is always performed near a Bhūtasthana. Nēma is usually undertaken by a single family, and is performed at the house. Agelu Tambila is celebrated by Billavas at their homes. The Kōla ceremony is usually performed for the propitiation of Bhūtas other than the Baiderkulu. The Muktesar or chief man, with the assistance of a Brāhman, fixes an auspicious day for its celebration. The jewels, and votive offerings made to the Bhūtas, are kept in the custody of the Muktesar. On the Kōla day, the people go in procession from the sthana to the Muktesar's house, and return to the sthana with the jewels and other articles. These are arranged on cots, and a Billava pūjāri places seven plantain leaves in a row on a cot, and heaps rice thereon. On each heap, a cocoanut is placed for the propitiation of the most important Bhūta. To the minor Bhūtas, these things are offered on three or five leaves placed on cots, or on the floor of the sthana, according to the importance of the Bhūta. A seven-branched torch must be kept burning near the cot of the principal Bhūta. The pūjāri goes to the courtyard of the sthana, and piles up a conical mass of cooked rice on a stool. Over this,

pieces of plantain fruits are scattered. Round the mass, several sheaths of plantain leaves are arranged, and on them tender cocoanut leaves, cut in various ways, are stuck. The pūjāri, who wears a metal belt and other jewelry, does pūja to the Bhūtas, and retires. The Nalkes or Paravas then advance dressed up as Bhūtas, and request permission to put on their canopy (ani) and brass anklet (guggirē). They then dance, and sing songs connected with the Bhūtas which are being propitiated. When they are exhausted and retire, the pūjāri steps forwards, and addresses the assembly in the following terms:—"Oh! great men who are assembled, with your permission I salute you all. Oh! Brāhmans who are assembled, I salute you. Oh! priest, I salute you." In this manner, he is expected to run through the names of all important personages who are present. When he has finished, the devil-dancers do the same, and the ceremony is at an end.

Of the Bhūtas, the best known are Brahmeru, Kodamanitaya, Kukkintaya, Jumadi, Sarlu Jumadi, Pancha Jumadi, Rakteswari, Panjurli, Kuppe Panjurli, Rakta Panjurli, Urundarayya, Hosadēvata (or Hosa Bhūta), Dēvanajiri, Kalkutta, Ukkatiri, Gulige, Bobbariya, Nicha, Duggalaya, Mahisandaya, Varte, Chāmundi, Baiderukulu, Okkuballala, and Oditaya. According to some, Jumadi is the small-pox goddess Māri. There are only two female Bhūtas—Ukkatiri and Kallurti. The Bhūtas are supposed to belong to different castes. For example, Okkuballala and Dēvanajiri are Jains, Kodamanitaya and Kukkinataya are Bants, Kalkutta is a smith, Bobbariya is a Māppilla, and Nicha a Koraga.

In some temples dedicated to Siva, the Tantris offer food, etc., to the various Bhūtas on special occasions,

such as Dīpavali and Sankarānthi. At Udipi, the Sanyāsis of the various mutts (religious institutions) seem to believe in some of the Bhūtas, as they give money for the performance of Kōla to Panjurli, Sarla Jumadi, and Chāmundi.

At Hiriadkāp in South Canara, where the Nalkes performed before me, the dancers wore spathes of the areca palm, forming spats to prevent the skin from being injured by the metal bells round their ankles as they danced.

The songs sung by the devil dancers are very numerous, and vary in different localities. Of the stories relating to Bhūtas, a very full account has been given by Mr. A. C. Burnell.*

A collection of stories (pādanollu) belonging to the demon-worshippers of the Tulu country, and recited at their annual festivals, was published at the Mangalore Basel Mission Press in 1886.

Nalla (black).—An exogamous sept of Koppala Velama.

Nallūr.—Nallūr and Nāluvītan are recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as sub-divisions of Nāyar.

Nāmadari.—A name, indicating one who wears the Vaishnava sectarian mark (nāmam). The equivalent Nāmala occurs as an exogamous sept of Bōya.

Nambidi.—A class, included among the Ambalavāsis. It is recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, that "Nampitis are of two classes, the thread-wearing and the threadless. The former have their own priests, while the Ilayatus perform the required sacerdotal functions for the latter. Their ceremonies are very much

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* Devil Worship of the Tuluvas. Ind. Ant., XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, 1894-7.

like those of the Kshatriyas. Tradition connects them with royalty acquired under rather unenviable circumstances. They are, therefore, called Tampurāns (lords) by the Sūdras, and also Mūppīnnu (elder) or Kāranavappāt (uncle) head of a matriarchal family. They observe twelve days' pollution, and inherit in the female line. Their women are called Māntalu. The chief man among the Nampitis is the Kāranavappat of Kakkāt in British Malabar." In the Cochin Census Report, 1901, it is noted that of the Nampidis "the Aiynikoor Nampidis, or the five families of Nampidis, are historically and socially the most important; the eldest male member possesses the honorific title of Karanavarpad, enjoying special privileges at the hands of the rulers of Cochin, as the members of the family once held responsible posts in the militia of the State. According to tradition, they were Nambūdris. One of the Perumāls or Viceroys of Kērala having proved troublesome, the Brāhmans resolved upon his removal. In the struggle that followed, the Perumāl was killed by the Brāhmans. When those who had slain him returned to the place where the Brāhmans had met in solemn conclave, they were gladly welcomed, and asked to sit in their midst; but, feeling that they had committed a heinous crime and thus disqualified themselves from sitting along with the Brāhmans, they volunteered to sit apart on the threshold of the council room by saying nam padimel (we on the threshold), which fact is supposed to account for the origin of their name Nampadi. They and their companions have since been regarded as having almost lost their social status as Brāhmans, and they are now classed along with the intermediate castes, having but a few privileges other than those enjoyed by the group. They wear the sacred thread, and have Gayatri. Nambūdri

Brāhmans officiate as priests at marriage ceremonies, srādhas, and purification at the end of birth or death pollution, which lasts only for ten days. They follow the marumakkatāyam law of inheritance (in the female line). The tāli (marriage badge) is tied by their own caste men. Nambūdris, or their own caste men, unite themselves in sambandham with Nampidi females. Nampidis are allowed to consort with Nāyar women. At public feasts they are not privileged to sit and eat with Nambūdris. Their women are called Manolpads."

Nambiyassan.—A division of the Ambalavāsis. It is noted, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, that "the Nampiassans, otherwise called Nampiyars or Nampis, have at present no temple service of any kind. They keep gymnasia or schools of training suited to the Indian system of warfare. They were the gurus (preceptors) of the fighting Nāyars. They seem, however, at one time to have followed the profession of garland-making in temples. It is still the occupation of many Nampiassans in Cochin and British Malabar." In the Cochin Census Report, 1901, it is stated that Nambiyar is rather a misleading title, as it is applied to more than one class of people. Some Nāyars are known by that title. In some places, Muthads and Elayads are also called Nambiyars. Chakkiyar Nambiyars beat a drum of a peculiar shape at intervals during the discourses or acting of the Chakkiyars, while their females, called Nangiyars, keep time. The Nangiyars also assume the figure of mythical characters, and perform a sort of pantomime on the Chakkiyar's stage. (*See* Unni.)

Nambiyatiri (a person worthy of worship).—A synonym of Elayad.

Nambūtiri Brāhman.*—The name Nambūtiri has been variously derived. The least objectionable origin seems to be nambu (sacred or trustworthy) and tiri (a light). The latter occurs as an honorific suffix among Malabar Brāhmans, and other castes above the Nāyars. The Nambūtiris form the socio-spiritual aristocracy of Malabar, and, as the traditional landlords of Parasu Rāma's land, they are everywhere held in great reverence.

A Nambūtiri, when questioned about the past, refers to the Kēralolpatti. The Nambūtiris and their organization according to grāmams owe their origin in legend, so far as Malabar is concerned, to Parasu Rāma. Parasu Rāma (Rāma of the axe), an incarnation of Vishnu, had, according to the purānic story, slain his mother in a fit of wrath, and was advised by the sages to expiate his sin by extirpating the Kshatriyas twenty-one times. He did so, and handed over the land to the sages. But this annoyed the Brāhmans exceedingly, for they got no share in the arrangement; so they banished Parasu Rāma from the land. By the performance of austerities he gained from the gods the boon to reclaim some land from Varuna, the sea god. Malabar was then non-existent. He was allowed to throw his axe from Cape Comorin, and possess all the land within the distance of his throw. So he threw his axe as far as Gokarnam in the South Canara district, and immediately there was land between these two places, within the direct line and the western ghāts, now consisting of Travancore and Cochin, Malabar, and part of South Canara. To this land he

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* With the exception of the notes by Mr. Subramani Aiyar, this article is a reproduction, with very slight changes, of an account of the Nambūtiris by Mr. F. Fawcett, which has already been published in the Madras Bulletin Series (III, I, 1900).

gave the name Karma Bhūmi, or the country in which salvation or the reverse depends altogether on man's individual actions, and blessed it that there be plenty of rain and no famine in it. But he was alone. To relieve his loneliness, he brought some Brāhmans from the banks of the Krishna river, but they did not remain long, for they were frightened by the snakes. Then he brought some Brāhmans from the north, and, lest they too should flee, gave them peculiar customs, and located them in sixty-four grāmams. He told them also to follow the marumakkattāyam law of succession (in the female line), but only a few, the Nambūtiris of Payyanūr, obeyed him. The Brāhmans ruled the land with severity, so that the people (who had somehow come into existence) resolved to have a king under whom they could live in peace. And, as it was impossible to choose one among themselves, they chose Kēya Perumal, who was the first king of Malabar, and Malabar was called Kēralam after him. The truths underlying this legend are that the littoral strip between the western ghāts and the sea is certainly of recent formation geologically. It is not very long, geologically, since it was under the sea, and it is certain that the Nambūtiris came from the north. The capital of the Chēra kingdom was very probably on the west coast not far from Cranganore in the Travancore State, the site of it being now called Tiruvānjikkulam. There is still a Siva temple there, and about a quarter of a mile to the south-west of it are the foundations of the old palace. The rainfall of Malabar is very high, ranging from 300 inches in the hills to about 120 inches on the coast.

"It is said that Parasu Rāma ruled that all Nambūdri women should carry with them an umbrella whenever they go out, to prevent their being seen by those of the

male sex, that a Nāyar woman called a Vrishali should invariably precede them, that they should be covered with a cloth from neck to foot, and that they should not wear jewels. These women are therefore always attended by a Nāyar woman in their outdoor movements, and they go sheltering their faces from public gaze with a cadjan (palm leaf) umbrella." *

The Kēralolpatti relates the story of the exclusion of the Panniyūr Brāhmans from the Vēdas. There were in the beginning two religious factions among the Nambūtiris, the Vaishnavas or worshippers of Vishnu in his incarnation as a boar, and the Saivas ; the former residing in Panniyūr (boar village), and the latter in Chovūr (Siva's village). The Saivas gained the upper hand, and, completely dominating the others, excluded them altogether from the Vēdas. So now the Nambūtiris of Panniyūr are said to be prohibited from studying the Vēdas. It is said, however, that this prohibition is not observed, and that, as a matter of fact, the Panniyūr Nambūtiris perform all the Vēdic ceremonies.

"Tradition," Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes, "as recorded in the Kēralamahatmiya, traces the Nambūtiris to Ahikshētra, whence Parasu Rāma invited Brāhmans to settle in his newly reclaimed territory. In view to preventing the invited settlers from relinquishing it, he is said to have introduced, on the advice of the sage Nārada, certain deep and distinctive changes in their personal, domestic, and communal institutions. The banks of the Nerbudda, the Krishna, and the Kāveri are believed to have given Brāhmans to Malabar. I have come across Nambūtiris who have referred to traditions in their families regarding villages on the east

* N. Subramani Aiyar, Malabar Quart. Review, VII, I, 1908.

coast whence their ancestors originally came, and the sub-divisions of the Smarta caste, Vadama, Brihatcharanam, Ashtasahasram, Sankēti, etc., to which they belonged. Even to this day, an east coast Brāhman of the Vadadesattu Vadama caste has to pour water into the hands of a Nambūtiri Sanyāsi as part of the latter's breakfast ritual. Broach in Kathiwar, one of the greatest emporiums of trade in the middle ages, is also mentioned as one of the ancient recruiting districts of the Nambūtiri Brāhmans. Broach was the ancient Bhrigucachchha, where Parasu Rāma made his avabhritasnāna (final bathing) after his great triumph over the Kshatriyas, and where to this day a set of people called Bhargava Brāhmans live. Their comparatively low social status is ascribed to the original sin of their Brāhman progenitor or founder having taken to the profession of arms. The date of the first settlement of the Nambūtiris is not known. Orthodox tradition would place it in the Trētāyuga, or the second great Hindu cycle. The reference to the grāmams of Chovvur and Panniyūr contained in the Manigrāmam Syrian Christian grant of the eighth century, and its absence in the Jewish, have suggested to antiquarians some time between the seventh and eighth centuries as the probable period. The writings of Ptolemy and the Periplus furnish evidence of Brāhman settlements on the Malabar coast as early as the first century, and it is probable that immigrant Brāhman families began to pour in with the ascendancy of the Western Chalukya kings in the fourth and fifth centuries, and became gradually welded with the pre-existing Nambūtiris. All these Nambūtiris were grouped under two great sections:—(*a*) the Vaishnavites or Panniyūr Grāmakkar, who came with the patronage of the Vaishnavites of the Chalukya dynasty with the boar as

their royal emblem; (*b*) the Saivites or Chovvūr Grāmakkar, who readily accepted the Saivite teachings from the Chēra, Chōla, and Pāndya kings who followed the Chalukyans. They included in all sixty-four grāmams, which, in many cases, were only families. Of these, not more than ten belong to modern Travancore. These grāmams constituted a regular autocracy, with four talis or administrative bodies having their head-quarters at Cranganore. It appears that a Rāja or Perumāl, as he was called, from the adjoining Chēra kingdom, including the present districts of Salem and Coimbatore, was, as an improved arrangement, invited to rule for a duodecennial period, and was afterwards confirmed, whether by the lapse of time or by a formal act of the Brāhman owners it is not known. The Chēra Viceroys, by virtue of their isolation from their own fatherland, had then to arrange for marital alliances being made, as best they could, with the highest indigenous caste, the Nambūtiris, the males consorting with Sūdra women. The matriarchal form of inheritance was thus a necessary consequence. Certain tracts of Kērala, however, continued under direct Brāhman sovereignty, of which the Ettappalli chief is almost the only surviving representative."

Writing in the eighteenth century, Hamilton observes * that "the Nambouries are the first in both capacities of Church and State, and some of them are Popes, being Sovereign Princes in both." Unlike the Brāhmans of the remainder of the Madras Presidency, who so largely absorb all appointments worth having under Government, who engage in trade, in, one may say, every profitable profession and business, the Nambūtiris hold almost entirely aloof from what the poet

* A New Account of the East Indies, 1744.

Gray calls "the busy world's ignoble strife," and, more than any class of Brāhmans, retain their sacerdotal position, which is of course the highest. They are for the most part landholders. A very large portion of Malabar is owned by Nambūtiris, especially in Walluvanād, most of which tāluk is the property of Nambūtiris. They are the aristocracy of the land, marked most impressively by two characteristics, exclusiveness and simplicity. Now and then a Nambūtiri journeys to Benares, but, as a rule, he stays at home. Their simplicity is really proverbial,* and they have not been influenced by contact with the English. This contact, which has influenced every other caste or race, has left the Nambūtiri just where he was before the English knew India. He is perhaps, as his measurements seem to prove, the truest Aryan in Southern India, and not only physically, but in his customs, habits, and ceremonies, which are so welded into him that forsake them he cannot if he would. It is noted, in the Gazetteer of Malabar, that "as a class, the Nambūdiris may be described as less affected than any other caste, except the very lowest, by western influences of whatever nature. One Nambūdiri is known to have accepted a clerical post in Government service; a good many are Adhigāris (village headmen), and one member of the caste possesses a Tile-works and is partner in a Cotton-mill. The bicycle now claims several votaries among the caste, and photography at least one other. But these are exceptions, and exceptions which, unimportant as they may seem to any one unacquainted with the remarkable conservatism of the caste, would certainly have caused considerable surprise to the author of the first Malabar Manual."

* The Nambūtiris everywhere believe that Europeans have tails.

Concerning the occupations of the Nambūtiris, Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes that "service in temples, unless very remunerative, does not attract them. Teaching as a means of living is rank heterodoxy. And, if anywhere Manu's dictum to the Brāhman 'Never serve' is strictly observed, it is in Malabar. Judging from the records left by travellers, the Nambūtiris used to be selected by kings as messengers during times of war. Writing concerning them, Barbosa states that "these are the messengers who go on the road from one kingdom to another with letters and money and merchandise, because they pass in safety without any one molesting them, even though the king may be at war. These Brāhmans are well read . . . . and possess many books, and are learned and masters of many arts; and so the kings honour them as such." As the pre-historic heirs to the entire land of Kērala, the Nambūtiris live on agriculture. But inefficiency in adaptation to changing environments operates as a severe handicap in the race for progressive affluence, for which the initial equipment was exceptionally favourable. The difficulties incidental to an effete landlordism have contributed to making the Nambūtiris a litigious population, and the ruinous scale of expenditure necessary for the disposal of a girl, be it of the most plebeian kind, has brought their general prosperity to a very low level. The feeling of responsible co-operation on the part of the unmarried males of a Nambūtiri household in the interests of the family is fast decreasing; old maids are increasing; and the lot of the average Nambūtiri man, and more especially woman, is very hard indeed. As matters now stand, the traditional hospitality of the Hindu kings of Malabar, which, fortunately for them, has not yet relaxed, is the only sustenance and support of the ordinary Nambūtiri. The

characteristic features of the Nambūtiri are his faith in God and resignation to his will, hospitality to strangers, scrupulous veracity, punctiliousness as regards the ordinances prescribed, and extreme gentility in manners. The sustaining power of his belief in divine providence is so great, that calamities of whatsoever kind do not exasperate him unduly. The story is told with great admiration of a Nambūtiri who, with his large ancestral house on fire, his only son just tumbled into a deep disused well, while his wife was expiring undelivered, quietly called out to his servant for his betel-box. Evening baths, and daily prayers at sunrise, noon and sunset, are strictly observed. A tradition, illustrative of the miracles which spiritual power can work, is often told of the islet in the Vempanat lake known as Patiramanal (midnight sand) having been conjured into existence by the Tarananallūr Nambūtiripād, when, during a journey to Trivandrum, it was past evening, and the prayers to Sandhya had to be made after the usual ablutions. To the lower animals, the attitude of the Nambūtiri is one of child-like innocence. In his relation to man, his guilelessness is a remarkable feature. Harshness of language is unknown to the Nambūtiris, and it is commonly said that the severest expression of his resentment at an insult offered is generally that he (the Nambūtiri) expects the adversary to take back the insult a hundred times over. Of course, the modern Nambūtiri is not the unadulterated specimen of goodness, purity, and piety that he once was. But, on the whole, the Nambūtiris form an interesting community, whose existence is indeed a treasure untold to all lovers of antiquity. Their present economic condition is, however, far from re-assuring. They are no doubt the traditional owners of Kērala, and hold in their hands the

janmom or proprietary interest in a large portion of Malabar. But their woeful want of accommodativeness to the altered conditions of present day life threatens to be their ruin. Their simplicity and absence of business-like habits have made them a prey to intrigue, fraudulence, and grievous neglect, and an unencumbered and well ordered estate is a rarity among Malabar Brāhmans, at least in Travancore."

The orthodox view of the Nambūtiri is thus stated in an official document of Travancore. "His person is holy; his directions are commands; his movements are a procession; his meal is nectar; he is the holiest of human beings; he is the representative of god on earth." It may be noted that the priest at the temple of Badrināth in Gurhwal, which is said to have been established by Sankarāchārya, and at the temple at Tiruvettiyūr, eight miles north of Madras, must be a Nambūtiri. The birth-place of Sankara has been located in a small village named Kāladi in Travancore. It is stated by Mr. Subramani Aiyar that "at some part of his eventful life, Sankara is believed to have returned to his native village, to do the last offices to his mother. Every assistance was withdrawn, and he became so helpless that he had to throw aside the orthodox ceremonials of cremation, which he could not get his relations to help him in, made a sacrificial pit in his garden, and there consigned his mother's mortal remains. The compound (garden) can still be seen on the banks of the Periyār river on the Travancore side, with a masonry wall enclosing the crematorium, and embowered by a thick grove of trees."

Every Nambūtiri is, theoretically, a life-long student of the Vēdas. Some admit that religious study or exercise occupies a bare half hour in the day; others devote to these a couple of hours or more. It is certain

that every Nambūtiri is under close study between the ages of seven and fifteen, or for about eight years of his life, and nothing whatsoever is allowed to interfere with this. Should circumstances compel interruption of Vēdic study, the whole course is, I believe, re-commenced and gone through *da capo*. A few years ago, a Nambūtiri boy was wanted, to be informally examined in the matter of a dacoity in his father's illam; but he had to be left alone, as, among other unpleasant consequences of being treated as a witness, he would have had to begin again his whole course of Vēdic study. The Nambūtiris are probably more familiar with Sanskrit than any other Brāhmans, even though their scholarship may not be of a high order, and certainly none other is to the same extent governed by the letter of the law handed down in Sanskrit.

As already said, the Nambūtiris are for the most part landholders, or of that class. They are also temple priests. The rich have their own temples, on which they spend much money. All over Malabar there are to be seen Pattar Brāhmans, wandering here and there, fed free at the illams of rich Nambūtiris, or at the various kōvilakams and temples. And they are always to be found at important ceremonial functions, marriage or the like, which they attend uninvited, and receive a small money present (dakshina). But the Nambūtiri never goes anywhere, unless invited. From what I have seen, the presents to Brāhmans on these occasions are usually given on the following scale:—eight annas to each Nambūtiri, six annas to each Embrāntiri, four annas to each Pattar Brāhman. The Nambūtiri is sometimes a money-lender.

Of the two divisions, Nambūtiri and Nambūtiripād, the latter are supposed to be stricter, and to rank higher

than the former. Pād, meaning power or authority, is often used to all Nambūtiris when addressing them. Thus, some who are called Nambūtiripāds may really be Nambūtiris. It may not be strictly correct to divide the Nambūtiris thus, for neither so-called division is separated from the other by interdiction of marriage. The class distinctions are more properly denoted the Ādhyan and Asyan, of which the former is the higher. An Ādhyan is never a priest; he is a being above even such functions as are sacerdotal in the temple. But there are also divisions according to the number of yāgams or sacrifices performed by individuals, thus:—Sōmatiri or Sōmayāji, Akkitiri or Agnihōtri, and Adittiri. A man may reach the first stage of these three, and become an Addittiripād by going through a certain ceremony. At this, three Nambūtiri Vaidikars, or men well versed in the Vēdas, must officiate. A square pit is made. Fire raised by friction between two pieces of pīpal (*Ficus religiosa*) wood with a little cotton is placed in it. This fire is called aupāsana. The ceremony cannot be performed until after marriage. It is only those belonging to certain gōtras who may perform yāgams, and, by so doing, acquire the three personal distinctions already named. Again, there are other divisions according to professions. Thus it is noted, in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "the Ādhyans are to study the Vēdas and Sāstras; they are prohibited from taking parānnam (literally meals belonging to another), from taking part in the funeral ceremonies of others, and from receiving presents. Those who perform the sacrifice of adhana are known as Aditiris, those who perform some yāga are called Somayagis or Chomatiris, while those who perform agni are called Agnihotris or Akkitiris. Only married men are qualified to perform the sacrifices. The Nāyar

is an indispensable factor in the performance of these sacrifices. The Bhattatiris are to study and teach the Sāstras; the Orthikans are to teach the Vēdas, and to officiate as family priests. The Vādhyans are to teach the Vēdas, and to supervise the moral conduct of their pupils. The Vydikans are the highest authority to decide what does or does not constitute violation of caste rules, and to prescribe expiatory ceremonies. The Smarthas are to study the Smritis and other Sāstras relating to customs, with the special object of qualifying themselves to preside over caste panchāyats, or courts, and to investigate, under the orders of the sovereign, cases of conjugal infidelity arising among the Nambūtiris. The rulers of Cochin and Travancore issue the writs convening the committee in the case of offences committed within their territory. The Zamorin of Calicut, and other Chiefs or Rājas, also continue to exercise the privilege of issuing such orders in regard to cases occurring in Malabar. The Tantris officiate as high priests in temples. They also practice exorcism. There are Ādhyans among this class also. Having received weapons from Parasu Rāma and practiced the art of war, the Sastrangakars are treated as somewhat degraded Brāhmans. They are prohibited from studying the Vēdas, but are entitled to muthalmura, that is, reading the Vēdas, or hearing them recited once. Having had to devote their time and energy to the practice of the art of war, they could not possibly spend their time in the study of the Vēdas. The Vaidyans or physicians, known as Mūssads, are to study the medical science, and to practice the same. As the profession of a doctor necessitates the performance of surgical operations entailing the shedding of blood, the Mūssads are also considered as slightly degraded. They too are entitled only to

muthalmura. Of these, there are eight families, known as Ashta Vaidyans. The Grāmanis are alleged to have suffered degradation by reason of their having, at the command of Parasu Rāma, undertaken the onerous duties of protecting the Brāhman villages, and having had, as Rakshapurushas or protectors, to discharge the functions assigned to Kshatriyas. Ooril Parisha Mūssads are supposed to have undergone degradation on account of their having accepted from Parasu Rāma the accumulated sin of having killed the warrior Kshatriyas thrice seven times, along with immense gifts in the shape of landed estates. They are not allowed to read the Vēdas even once."

"There are," Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes, "five sub-divisions among the Nambūtiris, which may be referred to :—

(1) *Tampurakkal.*—This is a corruption of the Sanskrit name Samrāt, and has probable reference to temporal as much as to secular sovereignty. Of the two Tampurakkal families in South Malabar, Kalpancheri and Azhvancheri, the latter alone now remains. As spiritual Samrāts (sovereigns) they are entitled to (1) bhadrāsanam, or the highest position in an assembly, (2) brahmavarchasa, or authority in Vēdic lore, and consequent sanctity, (3) brahmasamrāgyam, or lordship over Brāhmans, (4) sarvamanyam, or universal acknowledgment of reverence. Once in six years, the Azhvancheri Tampurakkal is invited by the Mahārāja of Travancore, who accords him the highest honours, and pays him the homage of a sāshtānganamaskāram, or prostration obeisance. Even now, the Samrāts form a saintly class in all Malabar. Though considered higher than all other sub-divisions of Nambūtiris, they form, with the Ādhyas, an endogamous community.

(2) *Ādhyas.*—They form eight families, called Ashtādhyas, and are said by tradition to be descended from the eight sons of a great Brāhman sage, who lived on the banks of the river Krishna. The fund of accumulated spirituality inherited from remote ancestors is considered to be so large that sacrifices (yāgas), as well as vanaprastha and sanyāsa (the two last stages of the Brāhman's life), are reckoned as being supererogatory for even the last in descent. They are, however, very strict in the observance of religious ordinances, and constantly engage themselves in the reverent study of Hindu scriptures. The Tantris are Ādhyas with temple administration as their specialised function. They are the constituted gurus of the temple priests, and are the final authorities in all matters of temple ritual.

(3) *Visishta.*—These are of two classes, Agnihōtris and Bhattatiris. The former are the ritualists, and are of three kinds :—(1) Akkittiris, who have performed the agnichayanayāga, (2) Adittiris, who have done the ceremony of agniadhana, (3) Chomatiris, who have performed the soma sacrifice. The Bhattatiris are the philosophers, and are, in a spirit of judicious economy, which is the characteristic feature of all early caste proscriptions, actually prohibited from trenching on the province of the Agnihōtris. They study tarkka (logic), vēdānta (religious philosophy or theology), vyākarana (grammar), mīmāmsa (ritualism), bhatta, from which they receive their name, and prabhākara, which are the six sciences of the early Nambūtiris. They were the great religious teachers of Malabar, and always had a large number of disciples about them. Under this head come the Vādyars or heads of Vedic schools, of which there are two, one at Trichūr in Cochin, and the other at Tirunavai in British

Malabar; the six Vaidikas or expounders of the caste canons, and the Smartas, who preside at the smartavichārams or socio-moral tribunals of Brāhmanical Malabar.

(4) *Sāmānyas.*—They form the Nambūtiri proletariat, from whom the study of the Vēdas is all that is expected. They take up the study of mantravāda (mystic enchantment), pūja (temple ritual), and reciting the sacred accounts of the Avatāra and astrology.

(5) *Jātimatras.*—The eight leading physician families of Malabar, or Ashta Vaidyas, are, by an inexcusable misuse of language, called Gatimatras or nominal Nambūtiris. The class of Nambūtiris called Yatrakalikkar (a corruption of Sastrakalikkar) also comes under this head. They are believed to be the Brāhmans, who accepted the profession of arms from their great founder. Those that actually received the territory from the hands of Parasu Rāma, called Grāmani Nambūtiris or Grāmani Ādhyas, are also Gatimatras. They were the virtual sovereigns of their respective lands. The physicians, the soldiers, and the landed kings, having other duties to perform, were not able to devote all their time to Vēdic recitations. The mutalmūrā or first study was, of course, gone through. In course of time, this fact was unfortunately taken by the religious conscience of the people to lower the Brāhmans who were deputed under the scheme of Parasu Rāma for special functions in the service of the nation in the scale of Nambūtiri society, and to mean a formal prohibition as of men unworthy to be engaged in Vēdic study.

Papagrastas are Nambūtiris, who are supposed to have questioned the divine nature of Parasu Rāma. The Urilparisha Mussus, who too are Brāhmans who received gifts of land from Parasu Rāma, the Nambitis,

the Panniyūr Grāmakkar, and the Payyanūr Grāmakkar or the Ammuvans (uncles), so called from their matriarchal system of inheritance, form other sections of Nambūtiris."

It is recorded, in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "certain special privileges in regard to the performance of religious rites and other matters of a purely social nature serve as the best basis for a sub-division of the Nambūtiris in the order of social precedence as recognised amongst themselves. For this purpose, the privileges may be grouped under two main classes, as given in the following mnemonic formula:—

A

1. Edu (the leaf of a cadjan grandha or book): the right of studying and teaching the Vēdas and Sastras.
2. Piccha (mendicancy symbolic of family priests): the right of officiating as family priests.
3. Othu (Vēdas): the right of studying the Vēdas.
4. Adukala (kitchen): the right of cooking for all classes of Brāhmans.
5. Katavu (bathing place or ghāt): the right of bathing in the same bathing place with other Brāhmans, or the right of touching after bathing, without thereby disqualifying the person touched for performing religious services.

B

1. Adu (sheep): the right of performing holy sacrifices.
2. Bhiksha (receiving alms): the right of becoming a Sānyasi.

3. Santhi (officiating as temple priests): the right of performing priestly functions in temples.
4. Arangu (stage): the right of taking part in the performance of Sastrangam Nambūdris.
5. Panthi (row of eaters): the right of messing in the same row with other Brāhmans.

Those who enjoy the privilege of No. 1 in *A* are entitled to all the privileges in *A* and *B*; those enjoying No. 2 in *A* have all the privileges from No. 2 downwards in *A* and *B*; those having No. 3 in *A* have similarly all the privileges from No. 3 downwards in *A* and *B*, and so on. Those entitled to No. 1 in *B* have all the privileges except No. 1 in *A*; similarly those entitled to No. 2 in *B* have all the privileges from No. 2 downwards in *B*, but only from No. 3 downwards in *A*, and so on."

Among the people of good caste in Malabar, to speak of one as a hairy man is to speak of him reproachfully. Yet, putting aside Muhammadans, the highest of all, the Nambūtiris are certainly the most hairy. In the young Nambūtiri, the hair on the head is plentiful, glossy, and wavy. The hair is allowed to grow over an oval patch from the vertex or a little behind it to a little back from the forehead. This is the regular Malabar fashion. The hair thus grown is done into a knot hanging over the forehead or at one side according to fancy, never hanging behind. The rest of the head, and also the face is shaved. The whole body, excepting this knot and the back, is shaved periodically. Karkkadakam, Kanni, Kumbham and Dhānu are months in which shaving should be avoided as far as possible. An auspicious day is always selected by the Nambūtiri for being shaved. Gingelly oil (enna) is commonly used for the hair. When a Nambūtiri's wife is pregnant, he refrains from the barber, letting his hair grow as it will. And, as he may

have as many as four wives, and he does not shave when any of them is in an interesting condition, he sometimes has a long beard. A marked difference observed between the Nambūtiri and those allied to him, and the lower races, is this. The former have whiskers in the shape of a full growth of hair on the cheeks, while in the latter this is scanty or entirely absent. Also, while the Nambūtiris have very commonly a hairy chest, the others have little or no hair on the chest. So, too, in the case of hair on the arms and legs. One Nambūtiri examined had hair all over the body, except over the ribs.

In connection with a hypothesis that the Todas of the Nīlgiris are an offshoot of one of the races now existing in Malabar, Dr. W. H. R. Rivers writes as follows.* "Of all the castes or tribes of Malabar, the Nambūtiris perhaps show the greatest number of resemblances to the customs of the Todas, and it is therefore interesting to note that Mr. Fawcett describes these people as the hairiest of all the races of Malabar, and especially notes that one individual he examined was like a Toda."

It is noted by Mr. Subramani Aiyar that "the Nambūtiris are passionate growers of finger-nails, which are sometimes more than a foot long, and serve several useful purposes. As in everything else, the Nambūtiri is orthodox even in the matter of dress. Locally-manufactured cloths are alone purchased, and Indian publicists who deplore the crushing of indigenous industries by the importation of foreign goods may congratulate the Kērala Brāhmans on their protectionist habits. Silk and coloured cloths are not worn by either sex. The style of dress is peculiar. That of the males is known as

* The Todas, 1906.

tattutukkuka. Unlike the Nāyar dress, which the Nambūtiris wear during other than religious hours, the cloth worn has a portion passing between the thighs and tucked in at the front and behind, with the front portion arranged in a number of characteristic reduplications. The Nambūtiri wears wooden shoes, but never shoes made of leather. Nambūtiri women have two styles of dress, viz., okkum koluttum vachchutukkuka for the Ādhyans, and ngoringutukkuka for ordinary Nambūtiris. Undyed cloths constitute the daily wearing apparel of Nambūtiri women. It is interesting to notice that all Brāhman women, during a yāgnam (sacrifice), when, as at other ceremonials, all recent introductions are given up in favour of the old, wear undyed cloths. Beyond plain finger-rings and a golden amulet (elassu) attached to the waist-string, the Nambūtiri wears no ornaments. His ears are bored, but no ear-rings are worn unless he is an Agnihōtri, when ear-pendants of an elongated pattern (kundalam) are used. The ornaments of the Nambūtiri women have several peculiarities. Gold bracelets are, as it were, proscribed even for the most wealthy. Hollow bangles of brass or bell-metal for ordinary Nambūtiris, and of solid silver for the Ādhyas, are the ones in use. The chuttu is their ear ornament. A peculiar necklace called cheru-tāli is also worn, and beneath this Ādhya women wear three garlands of manis or gold pieces, along with other jewels called kasumala, puttali, and kazhuttila. The Nambūtiris do not bore their noses or wear nose-rings, and, in this respect, present a striking contrast to the Nāyar women. No restriction, except the removal of the tāli, is placed on the use of ornaments by Nambūtiri women. Tattooing is taboo to Nambūtiri women. They put on three horizontal lines of sandal paste after bathing. These

marks have, in the case of Ādhya women, a crescentic shape (ampilikkuri). Kunkuma, or red powder, is never applied by Nambūtiri women to the forehead. Turmeric powder as a cosmetic wash for the face is also not in vogue. Mr. Fawcett states that, on festive occasions, turmeric is used by the Brāhmans of Malabar. But this is not borne out by the usage in Travancore. Eye-salves are applied, and may be seen extending as dark lines up to the ears on either side."

The ornaments and marks worn by individual Nambūtiri males are thus recorded by Mr. Fawcett:—

(1) Left hand: gold ring with large green stone on first finger; four plain gold rings on third finger; a ring, in which an ānavarāhan coin is set, on little finger. This is a very lucky ring. Spurious imitations are often set in rings, but it is the genuine coin which brings good luck. Right hand: two plain gold rings, and a pavitram on the third finger. The pavitram is of about the thickness of an ordinary English wedding ring, shaped like a figure of eight, with a dotted pattern at each side, and the rest plain. It is made of gold, but, as every Nambūtiri must wear a pavitram while performing or undergoing certain ceremonies, those who do not possess one of gold wear one made of darbha grass. They do not say so, but I think the ring of darbha grass is orthodox.

(2) Golden amulet-case fastened to a string round the waist, and containing a figure (yantram) written or marked on a silver plate. He had worn it three years, having put it on because he used to feel hot during the cool season, and attributed the circumstance to the influence of an evil spirit.

(3) Youth, aged 12. Wears a yak skin sash, an inch wide, over the left shoulder, fastened at the ends by

a thong of the same skin. He put it on when he was seven, and will wear it till he is fifteen, when he will have completed his course of Vēdic study. A ring, hanging to a string in front of his throat, called mōdiram, was put on in the sixth month when he was named, and will be worn until he is fifteen. The ears are pierced. He wears two amulets at the back, one of gold, the other of silver. In each are some chakrams (Travancore silver coins), and a gold leaf, on which a charm is inscribed. One of the charms was prepared by a Māppilla, the other by a Nambūtiri.

(4) Black spot edged with yellow in the centre of the forehead. Three horizontal white stripes on the forehead. A dab on each arm, and a stripe across the chest.

(5) Black spot near glabella, and two yellow horizontal stripes near it. The same on the chest, with the spot between the lines.

(6) Red spot and white stripe on the forehead. A red dab over the sternum, and on each arm in front of the deltoid.

(7) An oval, cream-coloured spot with red centre, an inch in greatest length, over the glabella.

The stripes on the forehead and chest are generally made with sandal paste. Rudrāksha (nuts of *Elæocarpus Ganitrus*) necklaces, mounted in gold, are sometimes worn.

The thread worn by men over the left shoulder is made of a triple string of country-grown cotton, and, unlike other Brāhmans of Southern India, no change is made after marriage. It may be changed on any auspicious day. Brāhmans of Southern India outside Malabar change their thread once a year.

Concerning the habitations of the Nambūtiris, Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "A Nambūtiri's

house stands within a compound (grounds) of its own. Each house has its own name, by which the members are known, and is called by the generic title of illam, the term used by Brāhmans, or mana, which is the reverential expression of Sudras and others. Sometimes the two words are found combined, *e.g.*, Itamana illam. In the compound surrounding the house, trees such as the tamarind, mango, and jāk, grow in shady luxuriance. The area of the compound is very extensive ; in fact, no house in Malabar is surrounded by a more picturesque or more spacious garden than that of the Nambūtiri. Plantains of all varieties are cultivated, and yams of various kinds and peas in their respective seasons. A tank (pond) is an inseparable accompaniment, and, in most Nambūtiri houses, there are three or four of them, the largest being used for bathing, and the others for general and kitchen purposes. Whenever there is a temple of any importance near at hand, the Nambūtiri may prefer to bathe in the tank attached to it, but his favourite ghāt is always the tank near his home, and owned by him. Wells are never used for bathing, and a hot-water bath is avoided as far as possible, as plunging in a natural reservoir would alone confer the requisite ablutional purity. Towards the north-west corner of the house is located the sarpakkavu or snake abode, one of the indispensables of a Malabar house. The kavu is either an artificial jungle grown on purpose in the compound, or a relic of the unreclaimed primeval jungle, which every part of Malabar once was. Right in the centre of the kavu is the carved granite image of the cobra, and several flesh-and-blood representatives of the figure haunt the house, as if in recognition of the memorial raised. In the centre of the compound is situated the illam or mana, which is in most cases a costly habitat. All the houses used until recently

to be thatched as a protection against the scorching heat of the tropical sun, which a tiled house would only aggravate. In form the house is essentially a square building, consisting of several courtyards in the centre, with rooms on all sides. On the east or west of the courtyard, a room having the space of two ordinary rooms serves as a drawing room and the dormitory of the unmarried members of the house. The rest of the house is zenāna to the stranger. Right on the opposite side of the visitor's room, beyond the central courtyard, is the arappura, of massive wood-work, where the valuables are preserved. On either side of this are two rooms, one of which serves as a storehouse, and the other as a bed-room. The kitchen adjoins the visitor's room, and is tolerably spacious. In the front, which is generally the east of the house, is a spacious yard, square and flat, and leading to it is a flight of steps, generally made of granite. These steps lead to a gate-house, where the servants of the house keep watch at night. The whole house is built of wood, and substantially constructed. Though the houses look antiquated, they have a classical appearance all their own. To the north-east is the gōsāla, where large numbers of oxen and cows are housed. The furniture of a Nambūtiri is extremely scanty. There are several cots, some made of coir (cocoanut fibre), and others of wooden planks. The kūrmasana is the Nambūtiri's devotional seat, and consists of a jak (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) plank carved in the form of a tortoise. Other seats, of a round or oblong shape, are also used, and no Brāhman addresses himself to his meal without being seated on one of them. Every Brāhman visitor is offered one, and is even pressed to sit on it. When the writer went to a Brāhman house at Kalati, the native village of Sankarāchārya, and wished the hosts not to trouble themselves about a seat for

him, he was told that the contact of a Brāhman's nates with the floor was harmful to the house. Hanging cots, attached to the ceiling by chains of iron, are common things in a Nambūtiri's house, especially in the bed-rooms. Skins of spotted deer, used to sit on during prayers, also form part of the Nambūtiri's furniture."

The Nambūtiris follow the makkatāyam law of inheritance from father to son; not, however, precisely as do the other people who do so. Nor is their system of inheritance the same as that of Brāhmans to the eastward (*i.e.*, of Southern India generally), with whom the family property may be divided up amongst the male members at the instance of any one of them. The Nambūtiri household is described by Mr. Subramani Aiyar as representing a condition intermediate between the impartible matriarchal form of the Nāyars and the divided patriarchal form of the other coast. Among the Nambūtiris, the eldest male member of the family is the Kāranavan or manager of it, and has complete control over all the property. The younger members of the family are entitled to nothing but maintenance. The head of the family may be a female, provided there is none of the other sex. The eldest son alone marries. The accepted practice, as well as the recognised principle among the Nambūtiris, seems to be in consonance with the directions expounded by Manu, viz.—

Immediately on the birth of his first-born, a man is the father of a son, and is free from the debt to the manes. That son is, therefore, worthy to receive the whole estate.

That son alone, on whom he throws his debt, is begotten for (the fulfilment of) the law. All the rest they consider the offspring of desire.

As a father supports his sons, so let the eldest support his younger brothers, and so let them, in accordance with the law, behave towards their eldest brother as sons behave towards their father.

Should a Nambūtiri eldest son die, the next marries, and so on. Women join the family of their husband, and to this too her children belong. Self-acquired property, that is property acquired by any junior member of the family through his own efforts outside the taravād,* lapses to the taravād at his death, unless he has disposed of it in his lifetime. This is the custom, which our law has not yet infringed. The taravād is the unit, and, as the senior male succeeds to the management, it may happen that a man's sons do not succeed directly as his heirs. The arrangement is an excellent one for the material prosperity of the family, for there is no dispersion. Every circumstance tends towards aggrandizement, and the family is restricted to no more than a requisite number by one member only marrying, and producing children. Impartibility is the fundamental principle. It is seldom that a Nambūtiri family comes to an end ; and such a thing as a Nambūtiri's estate escheating to Government has been said on eminent authority never to have been known. It happens sometimes that there is no male member to produce progeny, and in such a case the sarvasvadānam marriage is performed, by which a man of another family is brought into the family and married to a daughter of it, who, after the manner of the "appointed daughter" of old Hindu law, hands on the property through her children. The man so brought in is henceforth a member of the family which he has joined, and as such he performs the srāddha or

* Taravād or tarwad : a marumakkatāyam family, consisting of all the descendants in the female line of one common female ancestor.



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ceremonies to the dead. An exception to the general rule of inheritance is that seventeen families of Payannūr in North Malabar follow the marumakkattāyam system of inheritance, through the female line. The other Nambūtiris look askance at these, and neither marry nor dine with them. It is supposed that they are not pure bred, having Kshatriya blood in their veins.

Adoption among the Nambūtiris is stated by Mr. Subramani Aiyar to be of three kinds, called Pattu kaiyyal dattu, Chanchamata dattu, and Kutivazhichcha dattu. "The first is the orthodox form. Pattukai means ten hands, and indicates that five persons take part in the ceremony, the two natural parents, the two adopted parents, and the son to be adopted. The gōtra and sūtra of the natural family have to be the same as those of the adoptive family. The son adopted may have had his upanayanam already performed by his natural parents. An adoption of this kind cannot be made without the permission of all the male members of the family, of the Sapindas or Samānōdakas who are distinct blood relations, though some degrees removed. In the second form, the adoption relieves the adopted son of all ceremonial duties towards the natural parents. Involving, as it does, a position contrary to the established ordinances of Sankarāchārya, this kind of adoption is not in favour. The third form is still less orthodox. The adoption is made by a surviving widow, and mainly serves to keep up the lineage."

Liquor and flesh are strictly forbidden to the Nambūtiris. Their staple food is rice and curry. Uppēri is a curry of chopped vegetables fried in ghī (clarified butter), cocoanut or gingelly oil, seasoned with gingelly (*Sesamum indicum*), salt, and jaggery (crude sugar). Aviyal is another, composed of jāk fruit mixed with some

vegetables. Sweets are sometimes eaten. Candied cakes of wheat or rice, and rice boiled in milk with sugar and spices, are delicacies. Papadams (wafer-like cakes) are eaten at almost every meal. The Nambūtiri must bathe, and pray to the deity before partaking of any meal. An offering of rice is then made to the household fire, some rice is thrown to the crows, and he sits down to eat. The food is served on a plantain leaf or a bell-metal plate. It should be served by the wife; but, if a man has other Nambūtiris dining with him, it is served by men or children. The sexes feed separately. Before a man rises from his meal, his wife must touch the leaf or plate on which the food has been served. The reason may lie in this. The remains of the food are called ēchchil, and cannot be eaten by any one. Just before finishing his meal and rising, the Nambūtiri touches the plate or leaf with his left hand, and at the same time his wife touches it with her right hand. The food is then no longer ēchchil, and she may eat it. The Nambūtiri householder is said to be allowed by the Sāstras, which rule his life in every detail, to eat but one meal of rice a day—at midday. He should not, strictly speaking, eat rice in the evening, but he may do so without sinning heinously, and usually does. Fruit only should be eaten in the evening. Women and children eat two or three times in a day. A widow, however, is supposed to lead the life of a Sanyāsi, and eats only once a day. A Nambūtiri may eat food prepared by an east country Brāhman (Pattar), or by an Embrāntiri. In fact, in the large illams, where many people are fed every day, the cooks are generally Pattars in South Malabar. The Nambūtiri woman is more scrupulous, and will not touch food prepared by any one of a caste inferior to her own, as the Pattar is considered to be. Tea and coffee are objected

to. The Sāstras do not permit their use. At the same time, they do not prohibit them, and some Nambūtiris drink both, but not openly. Persons observing vows are not allowed an oil bath, to eat off bell-metal plates, or to eat certain articles of food. The gourd called churakhai, palmyra fruit, and palmyra jaggery are taboo to the Nambūtiri at all times. Water-melons are eaten regularly during the month Karkkātaka, to promote health and prolong life.

In connection with the Nambūtiri's dietary, Mr. Subramani Aiyar states that "their food is extremely simple. As Camöens writes: *

> To crown their meal no meanest life expires.
> Pulse, fruit, and herb alone their food requires.

"Ghī is not in a great requisition. Gingelly oil never enters the kitchen. Milk is not taken except as porridge, which goes by the name of prathaman (first). A bolus-like preparation of boiled rice-flour with cocoanut scrapings, called kozhakkatta, is in great favour, and is known as Parasu Rāma's palahāram, or the light refreshment originally prescribed by Parasu Rāma. Conji, or rice gruel, served up with the usual accessories, is the Nambūtiri's favourite luncheon. Cold drinks are rarely taken. The drinking water is boiled, and flavoured with coriander, cummin seeds, etc., to form a pleasant beverage."

The horse is a sacred animal, and cannot be kept. The cow, buffalo, dog, and cat are the animals ordinarily kept in domestication; and it is said that a parrot is sometimes taught to repeat Sanskrit slōkas.

There are families, in which the business of the magician and sorcerer is hereditary, chiefly in South

* The Lusiad.

Malabar and among the Chela * Nambūtiris, as those are termed who, in the turbulent period of Tippu's invasion, were made Muhammadans by force. True, these returned almost at once to their own religion, but a stigma attaches to them, and they are not looked on as true Nambūtiris.

It is extremely difficult to obtain reliable information regarding magic or anything allied to it among any people, and most difficult of all among the Nambūtiris. They possess magic books, but they will neither produce nor expound them. Hara Mēkhala is the name of one of these, which is most used. It is said that the sorcerer aims at the following :—

(1) Destruction (marana).
(2) Subjection of the will of another (vasikarana).
(3) Exorcism (uchchātana).
(4) Stupefaction (stambhana).
(5) Separation of friends (vidvēshana).
(6) Enticement as for love (mōhana).

Of these, the first may be carried out in the following manner. A figure representing the enemy to be destroyed is drawn on a small sheet of metal (gold by preference), and to it some mystic diagrams are added. It is then addressed with a statement that bodily injury or the death of the person shall take place at a certain time. This little sheet is wrapped up in another metal sheet or leaf (of gold if possible), and buried in some place which the person to be injured or destroyed is in the habit of passing. Should he pass over the place, it is supposed that the charm will take effect at the time named. Instead of the sheet of metal, a live frog or lizard is sometimes buried within a cocoanut shell, after nails have been stuck

* Chela, the cloth worn by Māppillas (Muhammadans in Malabar). There are also Chela Nāyars. The word is said to mean the rite of circumcision.

into its eyes and stomach. The deaths of the animal and the person are supposed to take place simultaneously. For carrying out vasīkarana, vidvēshana, and mōhana, betel leaves, such as are ordinarily used for chewing, or vegetables are somehow or other given to the victim, who unknowingly takes them into his mouth. Exorcism may be treated as follows. If a young woman is suffering from hysteria, and is supposed to be possessed by an evil spirit, or by the discontented spirit of some deceased ancestor, nervousness is excited by beating drums, blowing conch-shells, and otherwise making a horrible noise close to her. When the supreme moment is believed to have arrived, water is sprinkled over the wretched woman, who is required to throw rice repeatedly on certain diagrams on the ground, woven into which is a representation of the goddess Durga, the ruler of evil spirits. An effigy of the evil spirit is then buried in a copper vessel. By means of certain mantrams, Hanumān or Kāli is propitiated, and, with their aid, in some occult manner, the position of buried treasure may be found. It is said that the bones of a woman who has died immediately after childbirth, and the fur of a black cat, are useful to the magician.

There are said to be two Nambūtiris of good family, well known in South Malabar, who are expert mantravādis or dealers in magic, and who have complete control over Kuttichchāttan, an evil mischievous spirit, whose name is a household word in Malabar. He it is who sets fire to houses, damages cattle, and teases interminably. Concerning Kuttichchāttan, Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "The most mischievous imp of Malabar demonology is an annoying, quip-loving little spirit, as black as night, and about the size and nature of a well-nourished twelve-year old boy. Some people

say that they have seen him, *vis-à-vis*, having a forelock. The nature and extent of its capacity for evil almost beggar description. There are Nambūtiris, to whom these are so many missiles, which they throw at anybody they choose. They are, like Ariel, little active things, and most willing slaves of the master under whom they happen to be placed. Their victim suffers from unbearable agony. His clothes take fire, his food turns into ordure, his beverages become urine, stones fall in showers on all sides of him, but curiously not on him, and his bed becomes a literal bed of thorns. He feels like a lost man. In this way, with grim delight, the spirit continues to torment his victim by day as well as by night. But, with all this annoying mischief, Kuttichchāttan, or Boy Satan, does no serious harm. He oppresses and harasses, but never injures. A celebrated Brāhman of Changanacheri is said to own more than a hundred of these Chāttans. Household articles and jewelry of value can be left on the premises of the homes guarded by Chāttan, and no thief dares to lay his hands on them. The invisible sentry keeps diligent watch over his master's property, and has unchecked powers of movement in any medium. As remuneration for all these services, the Chāttan demands nothing but food, but that on a large scale. If starved, the Chāttans would not hesitate to remind the master of their power; but, if ordinarily cared for, they would be his most willing drudges. By nature Chāttan is more than a malevolent spirit. As a safeguard against the infinite power secured for the master by the Kuttichchāttan, it is laid down that malign acts committed through his instrumentality recoil on the prompter, who either dies childless, or after frightful physical and mental agony. Another method of oppressing humanity, believed to be in the power of sorcerers,

is to make men and women possessed by spirits ; women being more subject to their evil influence than men. Delayed puberty, sterility, and still-births are not uncommon ills of a woman possessed by a devil. Sometimes the spirits sought to be exorcised refuse to leave the body of the victim, unless the sorcerer promises them a habitation in the compound of his own house, and arranges for daily offerings being given. This is agreed to as a matter of unavoidable necessity, and money and lands are conferred upon the Nambūtiri mantravādi, to enable him to fulfil his promise."

A Nambūtiri is not permitted to swear, or take oath in any way. He may, however, declare so and so, holding the while his sacred thread between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, by way of invoking the Gāyatri in token of his sincerity. And he may call on the earth mother to bear witness to his words, for she may, should he speak falsely, relieve herself of him. The name of the Supreme Being is not used in oath. Nambūtiris have been known to take oath before a shrine, in order to settle a point in a Civil Court, but it is not orthodox to do so.

Something has been said already concerning vows. Those who desire offspring perform the vow called payasahavanam. Sacrifice is made through fire (hōmam) to the Supreme Being. Hōmam is also vowed to be done on a child's birthday, to ensure its longevity. Here we may observe a contrast between the Nambūtiri and a man of one of the inferior castes. For, while the vow of the Nambūtiri has assumed to some extent the nature of propitiatory prayer, of which those low down really know nothing, the other gives nothing until he has had the full satisfaction of his vow. Mrityunjayam, or that which conquers death, is another kind of hōmam in

performance of a vow. A further one is concerned with cleansing from any specific sin. Liberal presents are made to Brāhmans, when the vow is completed. In the vow called rudrābhishēka the god Siva is bathed in consecrated water. It is performed by way of averting misfortune. Monday is the day for it, as it is supposed that on that day Siva amuses himself with Parvati by dancing on Kailāsa.

The custom observed by Nambūtiris of letting the hair grow on the head, face, and body, untouched by the razor, when a wife is *enceinte* has been noticed already. A Nambūtiri who has no male issue also lets his hair grow in the same way for a year after the death of his wife. Should there, however, be male issue, on the eldest son devolves the duty of performing the ceremonies connected with the funeral of his mother (or father), and it is he who remains unshaven for a year. In such a case, the husband of a woman remains unshaven for twelve days (and this seems to be usual), or until after the ceremony on the forty-first day after death. The period during which the hair is allowed to grow, whether for a death, a pregnant wife, or by reason of a vow, is called dīksha. During dīksha, as well as during the Brahmachāri period, certain articles of food, such as the drumstick vegetable, milk, chillies, gram, dhāl, papadams, etc., are prohibited.

"Bathing," Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes, "is one of the most important religious duties of all Hindus, and of Brāhmans in particular. A Nambūtiri only wants an excuse for bathing. Every Nambūtiri bathes twice a day at least, and sometimes oftener. It is prohibited to do so before sunrise, after which a bath ceases to be a religious rite on the other coast. The use of a waist-cloth, the languti excepted, during a bath in private

or in public, is also prohibited. This injunction runs counter to that of the Sutrakāras, who say 'Na vivasanah snayat,' *i.e.*, bathe not without clothing. The fastidious sense of bath purity occasionally takes the form of a regular mania, and receives the not inapt description of galappisāchu or possession by a water-devil. Never, except under extreme physical incapacity, does a Nambūtiri fail to bathe at least once a day." Before concluding the bath, the cloth worn when it was begun, and for which another has been substituted, is wrung out in the water. From this practice, a patch of indurated skin between the thumb and first finger of the right hand, where the cloth is held while wringing it, is commonly to be seen. Almost every Nambūtiri examined in North Malabar was marked in this way.

The Nambūtiris observe sixty-four anācharams, or irregular customs, which are said to have been promulgated by the great reformer Sankarāchārya. These are as follows :—

(1) You must not clean your teeth with sticks.

(2) You must not bathe with cloths worn on your person.

(3) You must not rub your body with the cloths worn on your person.

(4) You must not bathe before sunrise.

(5) You must not cook your food before you bathe.

(6) Avoid the water kept aside during the night.

(7) You must not have one particular object in view while you bathe.

(8) The remainder of the water taken for one purpose must not be used for another ceremony.

(9) You must bathe if you touch another, *i.e.*, a Sūdra.

(10) You must bathe if you happen to be near another, *i.e.*, a Chandāla.

(11) You must bathe if you touch polluted wells or tanks.

(12) You must not tread over a place that has been cleaned with a broom, unless it is sprinkled with water.

(13) A particular mode of marking the forehead with ashes (otherwise described as putting three horizontal lines on the forehead with pure burnt cow-dung).

(14) You must repeat charms yourself. (You must not allow someone else to do it.)

(15) You must avoid cold rice, etc. (food cooked on the previous day).

(16) You must avoid leavings of meals by children.

(17) You must not eat anything that has been offered to Siva.

(18) You must not serve out food with your hands.

(19) You must not use the ghī of buffalo cows for burnt offerings.

(20) You must not use buffalo milk or ghī for funeral offerings.

(21) A particular mode of taking food (not to put too much in the mouth, because none must be taken back).

(22) You must not chew betel while you are polluted.

(23) You must observe the conclusion of the Brahmachāri period (the samāvarttanam ceremony). This should be done before consorting with Nāyar women.

(24) You must give presents to your guru or preceptor. (The Brahmachāri must do so.)

(25) You must not read the Vēdas on the road.

(26) You must not sell women (receive money for girls given in marriage).

(27) You must not fast in order to obtain fulfilment of your desires.

(28) Bathing is all that a woman should observe if she touches another in her menses. (A woman touching another who is in this state should, it is said, purify herself by bathing. A man should change his thread, and undergo sacred ablution. Women, during their periods, are not required to keep aloof, as is the custom among non-Malabar Brāhmans.)

(29) Brāhmans should not spin cotton.

(30) Brāhmans should not wash cloths for themselves.

(31) Kshatriyas should avoid worshipping the lingam.

(32) Brāhmans should not accept funeral gifts from Sudras.

(33) Perform the anniversary ceremony of your father (father's father, mother's father and both grandmothers).

(34) Anniversary ceremonies should be performed on the day of the new moon (for the gratification of the spirits of the deceased).

(35) The death ceremony should be performed at the end of the year, counting from the day of death.

(36) The ceremony to be performed till the end of the year after death (Dīksha is apparently referred to).

(37) Srāddhas should be performed with regard to the stars (according to the astronomical, not the lunar year).

(38) The death ceremony should not be performed until after the pollution caused by childbirth has been removed.

(39) A particular mode of performing srāddha by an adopted son (who should do the ceremony for his adopted parents as well as for his natural parents. Among non-Malabar Brāhmans, an adopted son has nothing to do with the ceremonies for his natural father, from whose family he has become entirely disconnected).

(40) The corpse of a man should be burnt in his own compound.

(41) Sanyāsis should not look at (see) women.

(42) Sanyāsis should renounce all wordly pleasures.

(43) Srāddha should not be performed for deceased Sanyāsis.

(44) Brāhman women must not look at any other persons besides their own husbands.

(45) Brāhman women must not go out, unless accompanied by women servants.

(46) They should wear only white clothing.

(47) Noses should not be pierced.

(48) Brāhmans should be put out of their caste if they drink any liquor.

(49) Brāhmans should forfeit their caste, if they have intercourse with other Brāhman women besides their wives.

(50) The consecration of evil spirits should be avoided. (Otherwise said to be that worship of ancestors should not be done in temples.)

(51) Sūdras and others are not to touch an idol.

(52) Anything offered to one god should not be offered to another.

(53) Marriage, etc., should not be done without a burnt offering (hōmam).

(54) Brāhmans should not give blessings to each other.

(55) They should not bow down to one another. (Among non-Malabar Brāhmans, juniors receive benediction from seniors. The Nambūtiris do not allow this.)

(56) Cows should not be killed in sacrifice.

(57) Do not cause distraction, some by observing the religious rites of Siva, and others those of Vishnu.

(58) Brāhmans should wear only one sacred thread.

(59) The eldest son only is entitled to marriage.

(60) The ceremony in honour of a deceased ancestor should be performed with boiled rice.

(61) Kshatriyas, and those of other castes, should perform funeral ceremonies to their uncles.

(62) The right of inheritance among Kshatriyas, etc., goes towards nephews.

(63) Sati should be avoided. (This also includes directions to widows not to shave the head, as is the custom among non-Malabar Brāhmans.)

In connection with the foregoing, Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes that the manners and customs of the Nambūtiris differ from those of the other communities in several marked particulars. They go by the specific name of Kēralāchāras, which, to the casual observer, are so many anāchāras or mal-observances, but to the sympathetic student are not more perhaps than unique āchāras. A verse runs to the effect that they are anāchāras, because they are not āchāras (observances) elsewhere. (Anyatracharanabhavat anacharaitismritah.) Of these sixty-four āchāras, about sixty will be found to be peculiar to Malabar. These may be grouped into the following six main classes :—

(1) *Personal hygiene.*—Bathing.

(2) *Eating.*—The rules about food, either regarding the cooking or eating of it, are very religiously observed. Absolute fasting is unknown in Malabar.

(3) *Worship of the Gods and manes.*—The anniversary of a person's death is regulated not by the age of the moon at the time, but by the star, unlike on the other coast. Again, a birth pollution has priority over other observances, even death ceremonies. A son who has to perform the funeral ceremonies of his father is rendered unfit for that solemn function by an intervening birth pollution. An adopted son is not, as in other parts of India, relieved of the srāddha obligations to his natural parents. Sectarian controversies in regard to Siva and Vishnu are strictly tabooed. The establishment of Hinduism on a non-sectarian basis was the sacred mission of Sankarāchārya's life. A single triple string (sacred thread) is worn irrespective of civil condition. This is contrary to the usage of the other coast, where married Brāhmans wear two or three triplets. Sprinkling water is an essential purificatory act after the use of the broom. An isolated rule requires dead bodies to be burnt in private compounds, and not in consecrated communal sites, as among the east coast people.

(4) *Conduct in society.*—Chastity is jealously guarded by the imposition of severe ostracism on adulterers. Formal salutation, and even namaskāras and anugrāhas, or prostration before and blessing by seniors, are prescribed. This is a striking point of difference between Malabar and the rest of India, and is probably based on the esoteric teaching of universal oneness.

(5) *Āsramas or stages of life.*—It is distinctly prescribed that a Brāhman should formally conclude the Brahmachāri āsrama, and that presents or dakshina to the gurus should be the crowning act. The asura or bride-sale form of marriage is prohibited—a prohibition which, in the case of the Nambūtiris, is absolutely unnecessary as matters now stand. An injunction in the

reverse direction against the ruinous tyranny of a bride-penalty would be an anxiously sought relief to the strugglings of many an indigent bride's father. The special law of Malabar, under which the eldest son is alone entitled to be married, has already been referred to. The anchorite stage comes in for regulation by the Manu of Kērala. The eyes of a Sanyāsin should never rest on a woman even for a second. This rule, which, if it errs at all, only does so on the side of safety, is not observed elsewhere, as the stage of a Sanyāsin is expected to be entered only after the complete subjugation of the passions. No āradhana (worship) srāddhas are performed for them, as is done in other parts. The soul of the Sanyāsin is freed from the bondage of Karma and the chance of recurring birth, and has only to be remembered and worshipped, unlike the ordinary Jīvan or still enslaved soul, whose salvation interests have to be furthered by propitiatory Karmas on the part of its earthly beneficiaries.

(6) *Regulation of women's conduct.*—Women are not to gaze on any face but that of their wedded lord, and never go out unattended. They are to wear only white clothes, and are never to pierce their noses for the wearing of jewelry. Death on the husband's funeral pyre is not to be the sacred duty of the Nambūtiri widow, who is advised to seek in the life of a self-sacrificing Sanyāsi a sure means of salvation.

In affairs of the world, time is reckoned by the ordinary Malabar kollam or solar year, the era beginning from the date of the departure of the last Perumāl, a sovereign of the western coast, to Arabia in 825. The months of the kollam year are Mēsha (Mētam), Vrishabha (Itavam), Mithuna, Karkkātaka, Sihma (Chingga), Kanya (Kanni), Tula, Vrischika, Dhanu, Makara, Kumbha, Mīna. In

affairs of religion, time is reckoned by the sālivāhana saka, or lunar year, the months of which are Chaitra, Vaisākha, Jēshta, Āshādha, Srāvana, Bhādrapata, Āsvavuja, Margasirsha, Paushya, Māgha, Phālguna. Every three years or thereabouts, there is added another month, called Adhika.

Some of the festivals kept by the Nambūtiris are as follows:—

(1) *Sivarātri.*—Worship of Siva on the last day of Māgha. Fast and vigil at night, and pūja.

(2) *Upākarma.*—The regular day for putting on a new sacred thread, after having cleansed away the sins of the year through the prāyaschittam, in which ceremony the five sacred products of the cow (milk, curds, ghī, urine, and dung) are partaken of. It is done on the 15th of Srāvana.

(3) *Nāgara panchimi.*—The serpent god is worshipped, and bathed in milk. On the 5th of Srāvana. This festival is common in Southern India.

(4) *Gōkulāshtami.*—Fast and vigil at night, to celebrate the birth of Krishna. Pūja at night, on the eighth day of the latter half of Srāvana.

(5) *Navarātri.*—The first nine days of Asvayuja are devoted to this festival in honour of Dūrga.

(6) *Dipāvali.*—Observed more particularly in North Malabar on the anniversary of the day on which Krishna slew the rākshasa Naraka. Everyone takes an oil bath. On the last day of Asvayuja.

(7) *Ashtkalam.*—The pitris (ancestors) of the family are propitiated by offerings of pinda (balls of rice) and tarpana (libations of water). On the new moon day of Dhanu.

(8) *Vināyaka Chaturthi.*—The elephant-headed god of learning is worshipped. At the end of the

ceremony, the idol is dropped into a well. On the 4th of Bhādrapada.

(9) *Pūram.*—The god of love, represented by a clay image, is propitiated by unmarried girls with offerings of flowers seven days successively. The image is finally given, together with some money, to a Brāhman, who drops it into a well. The flowers which have been used to decorate the image are placed by the girls at the foot of a jāk tree. Contrary to the custom of other Brāhmans, Nambūtiri girls are under no disgrace, should they attain puberty while unmarried. In the month of Mīna.

(10) *Ōnam.*—The great festival of Malabar, kept by everyone, high and low, with rejoicing. It is the time of general good-will, of games peculiar to the festival, and of distribution of new yellow cloths to relations and dependants. It is supposed to commemorate the descent of Maha Bali, or Mābali, to see his people happy.

(11) *Tiruvadira.*—Fast and vigil in honour of Siva, observed by women only. In the month of Dhanu.

(12) *Vishu.*—The solar new year's day. A very important festival in Malabar. It is the occasion for gifts, chiefly to superiors. The first thing seen by a Nambūtiri on this day should be something auspicious. His fate during the year depends on whether the first object seen is auspicious, or the reverse.

The following festivals are referred to by Mr. Subramani Aiyar :—

(1) *Trikkatta or Jyēshta star.*—In the month of Chingam. Food is cooked, and eaten before sunrise by all the married male members, as well as by every female member of a family. Though not of the previous day, the food goes by the name of Trikkatta pazhayatu, or the old food of the Trikkatta day. The import of this

festival, when the specific ordinance of Sankara against food cooked before sunrise is contravened, is not known.

(2) *Makam or Magha star.*—In the month of Kanni. On this day, the cows of the house are decorated with sandal paste and flowers, and given various kinds of sweetmeats. The ladies of the house take ten or twelve grains of paddy (rice), anoint them with oil, and, after bathing in turmeric-water, consecrate the grains by the recitation of certain hymns, and deposit them in the ara or safe room of the house. If there are in the house any female members born under the Makam star, the duty of performing the ceremony devolves on them in particular. This is really a harvest festival, and has the securing of food-grains in abundance (dhanyasamriddhi) for its temporal object.

(3) *All the days in the month of Thulam.*—In this month, young unmarried girls bathe every day before 4 A.M., and worship Ganapathi (Vignēsvara), the elephant god.

(4) *Gauri pūja.*—In the month of Vrischigam. This is done on any selected Monday in the month. The ceremony is known as ammiyum vilakkaum toduka, or touching the grinding-stone and lamp. The married women of the house clean the grinder and the grinding-stone, and place a bronze mirror by its side. They then proceed to worship Gauri, whose relation to Siva represents to the Hindu the ideal sweetness of wedded life.

(5) *Tiruvatira or Ardra star.*—In the month of Dhanu. This is a day of universal festivity and rejoicing. For seven days previous to it, all the members of the house bathe in the early morning, and worship Siva. This bathing is generally called tutichchukuli or shivering bath, as the mornings are usually cold and intensely

dewy. On the day previous to Tiruvatira, ettangnati, or eight articles of food purchased in the bazār, are partaken of. Such a repast is never indulged in on any other day. The Tiruvatira day is spent in the adoration of Siva, and the votaries take only a single meal (orikkal). Night vigils are kept both by the wife and husband seated before a lighted fire, which represents the sakshi (witness) of Karmas and contracts. (Hence the common term agnisakshi.) They then chew a bundle of betel leaves, not less than a hundred in number. This is called kettuvettila tinnuka. As the chewing of betel is taboo except in the married state, this function is believed to attest and seal their irrefragable mutual fidelity.

(6) *The new moon day in the month of Karkātakam.*—On the evening of this day, various kinds of sweetmeats are cooked, and, before the family partakes of them, a portion of each is placed in the upper storey as an offering to rats, by which their divine master, Ganapathi, is believed to be propitiated.

The Nambūtiri's business, which he has in hand, will be concluded to his satisfaction, should he on starting hear or see vocal or instrumental music, a harlot, a dancing-girl, a virgin, a litter, an elephant, a horse, a bull or cow tethered, curds, raw rice of a reddish colour, sugar-cane, a water-pot, flowers, fruits, honey, or two Brāhmans. Bad omens, which, if seen by a householder the first thing in the morning, mean trouble of some kind for the rest of the day, are a crow seen on the left hand, a kite on the right, a snake, a cat, a jackal, a hare, an empty vessel, a smoky fire, a bundle of sticks, a widow, a man with one eye, or a man with a big nose. A Nambūtiri, seeing any of these things, when setting out on a journey, will turn back. Should he, however, at once see a lizard on the eastern wall of a house, he

may proceed. To sneeze once is a good omen for the day; to sneeze twice is a bad one. An evil spirit may enter the mouth while one is yawning, so, to avert such a catastrophe, the fingers are snapped, and kept snapping until the yawn is over, or the hand is held in front of the mouth. But this idea, and the custom of snapping the fingers, are by no means peculiar to the Nambūtiris.

The Nambūtiris look on a voyage across the sea with horror, and no Nambūtiri has ever yet visited England.

A Nāyar should not come nearer than six paces to a Nambūtiri, a man of the barber caste nearer than twelve paces, a Tiyan than thirty-six, a Malayan than sixty-four, and a Pulaiyan than ninety-six. Malabar is, indeed, the most conservative part of Southern India. The man of high caste shouts occasionally as he goes along, so that the low caste man may go off the road, and allow him to pass unpolluted. And those of the lowest castes shout as they go, to give notice of their pollution-bearing presence, and, learning the command of the man of high caste, move away from the road. It is common to see people of the inferior castes travelling parallel to the road, but not daring to go along it. They do not want to. It is not because they are forced off the road. Custom clings to them as to the Nāyar or to the Nambūtiri. But even this is undergoing modification.

In connection with marriage, three chief rules are observed. The contracting parties must not be of the same gōtra; they must not be related to each other through father or mother; and the bridegroom must be the eldest son of the family. It is said that there are seven original gōtras, called after the sages Kamsha, Kāsyapa, Bharadvāja, Vatsya, Kaundinya, Atri, and Tatri; and that other gōtras have grown out of these.

Relationship is said by some to cease after the fourth generation, but this is disputed. The bride's dowry is always heavy. The wife joins her husband's gōtra, forsaking her own altogether. Women may remain unmarried without prejudice. Needless to say, this has the reverse of favour with Brāhmans outside Malabar. But the Nambūtiri girl or woman, who has not been married, is not allowed to disappear altogether from the world without at least the semblance of marriage, for, at her death, some part of the marriage ceremony is performed on her person. The tāli is tied. In like manner, a dead Toda girl is not allowed to go to her last rest unmarried. Infant marriage, which is the rule with other Brāhmans, is said to be unknown among the Nambūtiris. Mr. Justice K. Narayana Marar, however, writes * that he is "not prepared to assert that infant marriage is unknown among Nambūdris, and that marriages are always celebrated before puberty. There are instances, though rare, of infant marriages among them." When a girl is ten years old, or a little more, her father thinks of finding a husband for her. Property alone is the real thing to be considered. Every detail bearing on advantage to the family through the alliance is carefully thought out. Among the Malayālis generally, the young man with University degrees has command of the marriage market, but to the Nambūtiri these are of no account. When the girl's father has fixed on a likely young man, he gets his horoscope, and confers with a Vādhyar concerning the suitability or agreement of the young man's horoscope with that of his daughter. Should the decision of the Vādhyar be favourable, the young man's father is invited to the house on an

* Malabar Quart. Review, I, 1, 1902.

auspicious day, and the two fathers, together with some friends, talk the matter over. In the presence of all, the Vādhyar announces the agreement of the horoscopes of the pair whose marriage is in prospect. The dowry of the bride is then fixed. Probably many days have been occupied already, before the fathers can agree as to the settlement of the dowry. When this has been done, the Vādhyar consults the heavenly bodies, and appoints the day on which the marriage ceremonies should be begun. There is then a feast for all present. A Nambūtiri would be in very bad circumstances if he did not give at least a thousand rupees with his daughter. He should give much more, and does, if he possibly can. The ceremonies connected with marriage are supposed to occupy a year, but they are practically completed within ten days. They open with a party leaving the bride's illam, to invite the bridegroom and his party to the wedding. At the house of the bridegroom, the Vādhyar is given about eight fanams * (money) by both parties. The return to the bride's illam is a sort of noisy procession composed of the bridegroom with his friends, Nāyar women under big cadjan (palm leaf) umbrellas, a number of Nāyars, some of whom indulge in sword play with swords and shields, and Nambūtiris versed in the Sāstras. The bridegroom, who is the chief figure in the crowd, has a string (the usual kankanam) tied round his right wrist to protect him from evil spirits, and carries a bamboo with sixteen joints symbolic of the married state, a mirror for good luck, an arrow to guard the bride against evil spirits, four cloths, and a tāli. At the gate of the bride's illam, the procession is met by some Nāyar women dressed as

* In all ceremonies, and indeed in all arrangements connected with labour in rural Malabar, it is the rule to reckon in the old, and not in the existing, currency.

Nambūtiri women, who, being unable to come out and welcome the bridegroom, do so by proxy. These women wave a light in front of his face, and offer ashtamangalyam—a plate on which are plantain, betel leaves, a cocoanut, and other articles. On this day, the aupāsana agni, or sacred fire, is prepared in the courtyard of the bride's illam. A square pit is made, and fire is made with a piece of wood of the jāk tree and of the pīpal. This fire is rendered sacred by some mystic rites. It is kept burning throughout the marriage, and is preserved until the death of the future husband and wife in one of two ways :—

(1) keeping a lamp lighted at the fire burning perpetually;

(2) heating in the fire a piece of wood (plāsa or palāsa) or dharba grass. The wood or grass is put away, and, when the aupāsana agni is to be revived, is lighted in a fire of jāk and pīpal wood, while certain mantrams (consecrated formulæ) are repeated.

The body of the bridegroom (and, I think, of the bride should she die first) should be burnt in the aupāsana agni prepared on the first day of the wedding. The aupāsana agni is, as it were, a witness to the marriage. In the courtyard, the nandimukham ceremony is performed for propitiation of the minor deities and the pitris (spirits of deceased ancestors). A pot containing sacred or consecrated water, a piece of sandalwood, a piece of gold, flowers, raw rice, and some fruits are the apparent object of adoration. It is called kalas—the kalasam of the Tamil and Telugu countries—and is a common symbol of the deity. According to Monier Williams,* it should be worshipped thus. "In the

* Brahmanism and Hinduism.

mouth of the water-vessel abideth Vishnu, in its neck is Rudra, in its lower part is Brahma, while the whole company of the mothers are congregated in its middle part. O! Ganges, Yamuna, Godāvari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kāveri, be present in this water." A part of the aforesaid ceremony (nandimukham) is called the punyāhavachana, for which the bridegroom repeats certain hymns after the Vādhyar, and is sprinkled with water from the kalas. While all this is being done in the courtyard, the very same ceremony is performed within the house in the presence of the bride, whose father does inside the house what the bridegroom is doing outside. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the tāli is tied on the bride's neck. Then two of the cloths brought by the bridegroom are sent inside, and are touched by the bride. After she has touched them, they are again brought out, and the bridegroom puts them on. He touches the other two cloths, which are taken inside, and worn by the bride. A feast (ayaniūm) is the next item. The bride and bridegroom eat their share of it in separate rooms. Then comes the marriage proper. The bride's father washes the bridegroom's feet, while a Nāyar woman waves a light (ayiram tiri or thousand lights) before his face, and conducts him to the hall prepared for the wedding. In this is a mantapam, or sort of raised seat, having four pillars and a covering roof. The pillars of the mantapam, and the ceiling of the hall, are covered with red cloth (red being an auspicious colour), and there are festoons of mango leaves. To one side of the mantapam is a screen, behind which stand the Nambūtiri women of the household, looking at the scene in the hall through holes. The bride and bridegroom are led to the mantapam, the former following the latter screened from the general gaze by a big

cadjan umbrella. She hands him a garland, and, in doing so, she should not touch his hand. He puts on the garland. Vēdic hymns are chanted, and the pair are brought face to face for the first time. This is called mukhadarsanam, or seeing the face. The bridegroom leads the bride three times round the fire and water jar, moving round to the right, repeating a mantram, which is rendered as follows by Monier Williams.* "I am male, thou art female. Come, let us marry, let us possess offspring. United in affection, illustrious, well disposed towards each other, let us live for a hundred years." Each time the bridegroom leads the bride round, he causes her to mount a mill-stone, saying "Ascend thou this stone, and be thou firm as this rock.†" Then, at a moment supposed to be auspicious, water is poured on the hands of the bridegroom, signifying that the girl and her dowry have been handed over to him. The Nambūtiri women behind the screen, and the Nāyar women in the hall, utter a shrill cry "like that of the Vaikura." The fire here mentioned is probably taken from the original aupāsana agni. Holding the bride by the hand, the bridegroom leads her seven steps—one for force, two for strength, three for wealth, four for well-being, five for offspring, six for the seasons, and seven as a friend. He tells her to be devoted to him, and to bear him many sons, who may live to a good old age. This ceremony is called the saptapadi (seven steps). A hōmam is then performed. It is said that the fire used on this occasion must be preserved until the death of the bridegroom, and used at the cremation of his body. A feast is the next thing. When it is over, the bride's father takes her on his lap, asks his son-in-law to treat her well,

* *Op. cit.* † *Ibid.*

and formally hands her over to him. The bridegroom promises to do so, and takes his wife by the hand. Then there is a procession to the bridegroom's illam, the bride being carried in a litter, and the bridegroom walking and carrying the sacrificial fire. So ends the first day. It seems that the newly-married couple live apart for the next three days, during which the bride is initiated into household duties. The only daily ceremony is the hōmam, which is done by the pair after bathing, and before taking food. On the fourth day there is a ceremony, in which the bride plants a jasmine cutting, by way of symbolising help to her husband in the performance of his religious duties. At night the couple are conducted to the bridal chamber by the Vādhyar. The bed is merely a grass mat, or a common country blanket, covered with a white sheet, and having a little ridge of rice and paddy, signifying plenty, round the edge. The Vādhyar withdraws, and the bridegroom shuts the door.* The Vādhyar outside cites appropriate passages from the sacred writings, which are repeated by the bridegroom. On the fifth day, the bride and bridegroom anoint each other with oil, and the latter combs the hair of the former. Then, before bathing, they catch some little fish called mānatt kani (eyes looking up) which are found in pools, with a cloth used as a net. While this is being done, a Brahmachāri asks the bridegroom "Did you see a cow and a son?" Pointing to the fishes caught in the cloth, the bridegroom replies "Yes, they are here." This is said to be suggestive of progeny, fishes being emblematic of fertility. Hōmam is then done. At night, the bridegroom adorns the bride with flowers, and makes her look into a mirror, while he

* The Nambūtiris take objection to a statement of Mr. Logan, in the Manual of Malabar, that the Vadhyar shuts the door, and locks it.

recites mantrams suitable to the occasion. From the sixth to the ninth day there is practically nothing in the way of ceremonial. And, as that proper to the tenth day is invariably done on the sixth day, the ceremony may be said to conclude on the night of the sixth day. A few Brāhmans are fed to please the pitris, and the couple go to a jāk tree, under which some rice, curds, and ghī are placed on kūsa grass, and an offering is made of flowers and sandalwood or powder. The kankanam, bamboo staff, arrow, and mirror are given to the Vādhyar, and the wedding is over.

Sir W. W. Hunter* speaks of the Nambūtiris as "a despised class," they having had fishermen ancestors. The little ceremony of catching fish, which is a very important item in the marriage rites, may look like preservation in meaningless ceremonial of something real in the past, but it only shows that, in an endeavour to interpret ceremonial, we must be far from hasty. Among the Shivalli Brāhmans of South Canara, the marriage mat is taken to a tank in procession. The bride and bridegroom make a pretence of catching fish, and, with linked fingers, touch their foreheads. It is recorded, in the Manual of South Canara, that "all Tulu chronicles agree in ascribing the creation of Malabar and Canara, or Kērala, Tuluva, and Haiga, to Parasu Rāma, who reclaimed from the sea as much land as he could cover by hurling his battle-axe from the top of the western ghauts. According to Tulu traditions, after a quarrel with Brāhmans who used to come to him periodically from Ahi-Kshētra, Parasu Rāma procured new Brāhmans for the reclaimed tract by taking the nets of some fishermen, and making a number of Brāhmanical threads

* Orissa. Annals of Rural Bengal.

with which he invested the fishermen, and thus turned them into Brāhmans, and retired to the mountains to meditate, after informing them that, if they were in distress, and called on him, he would come to their aid. After the lapse of some time, during which they suffered no distress, they were curious to know if Parasu Rāma would remember them, and called upon him in order to find out. He promptly appeared, but punished their thus mocking him by cursing them, and causing them to revert to their old status of Sudras."

A more detailed account of the marriage ceremonial is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar, which may well be quoted. "The first preliminaries in arranging a Nambūdiri marriage are the inevitable comparison of horoscopes, and the settlement of the dowry. When these have been satisfactorily concluded, an auspicious day for the wedding is selected in consultation with the astrologer. On that day, the bridegroom, before he starts from his illam, partakes with his relatives and friends of a sumptuous repast called the ayani un. A similar feast is held simultaneously at the bride's house. On leaving the illam, as he crosses the threshold, and indeed on all occasions of importance, the bridegroom must be careful to put his right foot first. He also mutters mantrams of an auspicious nature, called mangala sutrangal. As he passes out of the gate, he is met by a bevy of Nāyar ladies, carrying the eight lucky articles (ashtamangalyam). These are a grandha, a washed cloth, a cheppu or rouge-box, some rice, a vāl kannādi or metal hand-mirror, some kunkumam (crimson powder), chānthu (ointment of sandal, camphor, musk and saffron), and mashi (bdellium or any eye salve). On his journey to the bride's illam, he is preceded by a noisy procession of Nāyars, armed with swords and lacquered shields, who constitute his

agambadi or body-guard, and by Nambūdri friends and relatives, one of whom carries a lighted lamp. At the gate of the bride's illam he is met by a band of Nāyar women, dressed like antarjanams, and carrying the ashtamangalyam and lighted lamps. The bridegroom enters the inner court-yard (nadumittam), and takes his seat in the usual eastward position. The bride's father comes and sits opposite him, and, clasping his right hand, formally invites him to bathe and wed his daughter, an invitation which he formally accepts. After his bath, he returns clad in fresh clothes, and wearing a ring of dharba or kusa grass (*Cynodon Dactylon*), and takes his seat in the room adjoining the porch (pūmukham), called purattalam. He then makes an offering of a few fanams (money) to his family deities, performs Ganapathi puja (worship of the elephant god), and presents four or five Nambūdris with a few fanams each, and with betel leaf and areca nut. This is called āsramapischētha prayaschittam, and is in expiation of any sins into which he may have been betrayed during his bachelor days. Similar gifts are also made first to two Nambūdris of any gōtra considered as representing the deities called Visvadvās, and then to two others of different gōtras representing the deceased ancestors or Pitris. The last gift is called Nāndimukham. Meanwhile, within the house the bride is conducted to the vadakkini room, veiled in an old cloth, and carrying a piece of bell-metal shaped like a hand-mirror (vāl kannādi). Her father, after washing his feet and putting on a darbha ring, comes and performs Ganapathi pūja, and repeats more or less the same ritual that has been performed without. The bride is then sprinkled with holy water by her father and four other Nambūdiris. The tāli or marriage symbol is brought in a brass vessel containing holy water,

and laid near the idol to which the daily domestic worship is paid; and, after further offerings to Ganapathi, the bridegroom is summoned to enter the illam. Before doing so he purifies himself, taking off the darbha ring, making the 'caste marks' with holy ashes (bhasmam), washing his feet, replacing the ring, and being sprinkled with holy water by four Nambūdiris—a form of ritual which recurs constantly in all ceremonies. He enters the nadumittam, preceded by a Nambūdiri carrying a lighted lamp, and takes his seat on a wooden stool (pidam) in the middle of the court where the bride's father makes obeisance to him, and is given four double lengths of cloth (kaccha), which the bridegroom has brought with him. They are taken to the bride, who puts on two of them, and returns two for the bridegroom to wear. The bridegroom then goes to the kizhakkini, where he prepares what may be called the "altar." He smears part of the floor in front of him with cow-dung and then, with a piece of jack-wood (*Artocarpus integrifolia*), called sakalam, draws a line at the western side of the place so prepared, and at right angles to this line five more, one at each end, but not actually touching it, and three between these. He then places the pieces of jack-wood on the altar, and ignites it with fire brought from the hearth of the bride's illam. He feeds the flame with chips of plāsu or chamatha (*Butea frondosa*). This fire is the aupāsana agni, regarded as the witness to the marriage rite. It must be kept alight—not actually, but by a pious fiction *—till the parties to the marriage die, and their funeral pyre must be kindled from it. Three pieces of plāsu called paridhi, and eighteen pieces called udhmam, tied together by a string of darbha, are placed

* By keeping a lamp lighted at the fire perpetually alight, or by heating a piece of plāsu or darbha grass in the fire, and putting it away carefully.

on the northern side of the altar on two pieces of jack-wood; and there are also brought and placed round the altar four blades of darbha grass, a small bell-metal vessel, an earthenware pot full of water, a pair of grind-stones (ammi and ammikuzha), a small winnowing fan containing parched paddy (malar), and a copper vessel of ghee (clarified butter) with a sacrificial ladle made of plāsu. Meanwhile, the bride's father ties the tāli round her neck in the vadakkini, and her mother gives her a garland of tulasi (*Ocimum sanctum*). She is conducted to the kizhakkini, preceded by a Nambūtiri carrying a lamp called āyyira tiri (thousand wicks), and is made to stand facing the bridegroom on the north or north-east of the altar. This is called mukha-dharsanam (face-beholding). She gives the garland to the bride-groom. Now comes the central rite of this elaborate ceremonial, the udaga-purva-kannyaka-dhānam, or gift of a maiden with water. The bride and her father stand facing west, and the bridegroom facing them. All three stretch out their right hands, so that the bride's hand is between those of her father and the bridegroom, which are above and below hers respectively. A Nambūtiri Othikan or ritual expert pours water thrice into the father's hand. The latter each time pours it into his daughter's hand, and then, grasping her hand, pours it into the bridegroom's hand. The dowry is then given to the bride, who hands it over to the bridegroom. She then passes between him and the fire, and sits on an āmana palaga * on the east of the altar, while the bridegroom sits on another palaga on her left, and burns the udhmams (except one piece of plāsu and the darbha string used to tie the bundle), and

* An āmana palaga or āma palaga, literally tortoise plank, is a low wooden seat of chamatha wood, supposed to be shaped like a tortoise in outline.

makes an oblation of ghee called agharam. The next rite is called Panigrahanam. The bridegroom rises from his seat, turns to the right, and stands facing the bride, who remains seated, holding the mirror in her left hand. She stretches out her right hand palm upwards, with the fingers closed and bent upwards. He grasps it, and sits down again. A brother of the bride now comes and takes the mirror from the bride, puts it on a palaga, and professes to show her her own reflection in its surface. Then the bridegroom pours a little ghee into her joined hands, to which the bride's brother adds two handfuls of paddy from the winnowing basket, and the bridegroom then brushes the paddy from her hands into the fire. This is called the Lajahōmam. At its conclusion, bride and bridegroom perform a pradakshinam round the fire, passing outside the water-pot but not the grindstone and fan. Next comes the important piece of ceremonial called Asmārohanam, symbolising immutability. The bride and bridegroom stand west of the grindstones, and the bridegroom, taking her feet one by one, places them on the stones, and then grasps feet and stones with both hands. Lajahōmam, pradhakshinam, and asmārohanam are each repeated thrice. Then comes the rite called Saptapadi or seven paces. The bridegroom leads his bride seven steps towards the north-east, touching her right foot with his right hand as he does so. They then pass between the grindstones and the fire, and seat themselves on the west of the earthen pot facing east, the bride behind the bridegroom; and the latter performs a somewhat acrobatic feat which it must be difficult to invest with any dignity. He bends backwards, supporting himself by placing the palms of his hands on the ground behind him, until he can touch with the top of his head that of the bride, who

bends forward to facilitate the process. After this, the bridegroom sprinkles himself and the bride with water from the earthen pot. They then return to their seats west of the altar, and face north, ostensibly looking at the pole star (Druvan), the star Arundati, and the Seven Rishis (Ursa Major), which the bridegroom is supposed to point out to the bride, while he teaches her a short mantram invoking the blessing of long life on her husband. The bridegroom then makes two oblations, pouring ghee on the sacred fire, the first called Sishtakral-hōmam and the second Darmmihōmam. He then places on the fire the paridhis, the remaining udhmams and dharba grass, and the rest of the ghee. A start is then made for the bridegroom's illam, the bridegroom carrying the chamatha branch used in making the aupāsana agni in the bride's house. On arrival, an altar is prepared in much the same manner as before, the chamatha branch is ignited, and darbha and ghee are offered. The bride and bridegroom next spend a few moments closeted in the same room, she lying on a skin spread over a new cloth on the floor, and he sitting on an āmana palaga. In the evening, aupāsana hōmam, or offerings of chamatha in the sacred fire, and Vaisyadēva hōmam, or offerings of boiled rice, are made. These, which are known as a second hōmam, may be postponed till next afternoon, if there is no time for them on the actual wedding day. They have to be performed daily for ten months. The first three days on which these hōmams are performed (viz., the wedding day and the two following it, or the three days after the wedding as the case may be) are regarded as days of mourning (dīksha), and clothes are not changed. On the fourth day, the newly married couple have an oil-bath, and the dīksha is considered to be at an end. After the usual

hōmams and worship of Ganapathi, the bride is led to the bridal chamber at an auspicious moment. Her husband joins her, carrying two garlands of jasmine, one of which he puts on the lamp placed in the south-east corner of the room, and one round his wife's neck. He then smears the upper part of her body with the ointment known as chānthu, and she herself smears the lower part. Tum vir penem suum fæminæ ad partes pudendas admovit, vestibus scilicet haud remotis. They then bathe and change their clothes, and sit near each other, the wife screened behind an umbrella. Her husband gives her water, and after some further rites they eat from the same plantain leaf. Actual cohabitation commences from that night. The pair are conducted to the bridal chamber by the Vādhiyār. The nuptial couch is but a grass mat or a common country blanket covered with a white sheet, with a little ridge of rice and paddy signifying plenty around the edges. The final ceremony is the hōmam called stālipagam. It is performed on the day after the first full moon day after the second hōmam. If the moon is at the full $\frac{3}{4}$ nazhiga before sunset or earlier, the ceremony may be performed on the full moon day itself."

It will have been seen already that the Nambūtiris are not strict monogamists. Some stated that a man may have four wives, and that the same ceremony as that described must be performed for wedding all four wives. Moreover, there is no restriction to the number of Nāyar women, with whom a man may be associated.

Hamilton, writing concerning Malabar at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, says that "when the Zamorin marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambūtiri or chief priest

has enjoyed her, and, if he pleases, may have three nights of her company, because the first fruit of her nuptials must be an holy oblation to the god he worships: and some of the nobles are so complaisant as to allow the clergy the same tribute; but the common people cannot have that compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the priest's place themselves."

Of ceremonies after marriage, and those performed during pregnancy and subsequent to the birth of a child, the following may be noted:—

(1) Garbhādhānam, performed soon after marriage. There is a hōmam, and the husband puts the juice of some panic grass into his wife's nostrils.

(2) Garbharakshana secures the unborn child from dangers. It is not considered important, and is not always done.

(3) Pumsavana, performed in the third month of pregnancy for the purpose of securing male offspring. The desire of the Hindu for male rather than female children need not be dilated on. Putra (a son) is the one who saves from hell (put). It is by every religious text made clear that it is the duty of every man to produce a son. The Nambūtiri may have practically any number of wives in succession, until he begets a son by one of them, and he may adopt a son through the sarvasvadānam form of marriage. On the day devoted to the pumsavana ceremony, the wife fasts until she is fed by her husband with one grain of corn, symbolising the generative organs of the male.

(4) Sīmantonnayana is the next ceremony performed for the benefit of the unborn child. It is done between the sixth and eighth months of pregnancy, and consists in a burnt sacrifice to the deity, and the husband parting the hair of his wife's head with a porcupine quill, or with

three blades of the sacred kūsa grass, repeating the while Vēdic verses.

(5) Jātakarma is the name of the birth ceremony, and is performed by the father of the child. Honey and ghī are introduced into the mouth of the infant with a golden spoon or rod, to symbolise good fortune. Then the ears and shoulders are touched with the spoon or rod, while Vēdic texts are recited.

(6) Mēdhājananam, rarely done, is for inducing intelligence.

(7) Āyusha, for prolonging life, is the next in order. The father gives the child a secret name, having an even number of syllables for a male and an uneven number for a female, which is never revealed to any one except the mother.

(8) Nāmakarana is the ceremony, at which the child is named, and is said to be done on the tenth day after birth. The naming of a child is an important religious act, which is supposed to carry consequences throughout life. The parents, assisted by a Vādhyān, make a burnt sacrifice to the deity.

(9) Annaprāsana is the ceremony at which food other than that from nature's fount is first given. It is done in the sixth month after birth. The father carries the child to a group of friends and relations. The Vādhyān or purōhit is present and repeats Vēdic texts, while the father places a little rice and butter in the child's mouth.

(10) Chaula is the ceremony when the hair is cut for the first time in the Nambūtiri fashion.

(11) Karna vēdha is the occasion on which the ears are bored.

On the Vidyādasami day, the tenth of Āsvayuja, when a male child is five years old, the father goes

through the form of initiating him into the mysteries of the alphabet.

The following details of some of the above ceremonies are given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "The chief ceremonies connected with pregnancy are Pumsavanam or rite to secure male offspring, at which the husband puts a grain of barley and two beans, to represent the male organ, into his wife's hand, and pours some curds over them, which the wife then swallows, and also pours some juice of karuga grass into her right nostril; and Sīmantham, a ceremony usually performed in the fourth month of pregnancy, at which the husband parts the wife's hair four times from back to front with a sprig of atti (*Ficus glomerata*), a porcupine quill which must have three white marks on it, and three blades of darba grass, all tied together, after which mantrams are sung to the accompaniment of vīnas. The first ceremony to be performed on the birth of a child is jāthakarmam. A little gold dust is mingled with ghee and honey, and the father takes up some of the mixture with a piece of gold, and smears the child's lips with it, once with a mantram and once in silence. He next washes the gold, and touches the child's ears, shoulders and head with it, and finally makes a gift of the bit of gold and performs nāndimukham. The ceremony of naming the child, or nāmakarmam, takes place on the twelfth day. The father ties a string round the child's waist, and marks its body with the sacred ash (bhasmam). Then, after the usual 'gifts' he pronounces thrice in the child's right ear the words 'Dēvadatta Sarmmasi,' or if the child be a girl, 'Nīli dāsi.' He then calls out the name thrice. Then, taking the child from its mother, he again calls out the name thrice, and finally gives the child back to its mother, who in turn

calls out the name thrice. Gifts and nāndimukham complete the ceremony. In the fourth month, the child is ceremonially taken out of doors (nishkramana or vīttil purapāttu) by the father, who carries it to a cocoanut, round which he makes three pradakshinams."

The death ceremonies of the Nambūtiris are commenced shortly before death actually takes place. When death is believed to be unmistakably near, some verses from the Taittirya Upanishad are spoken in the dying man's ears. These are called karna mantras, or ear hymns. A bed of kūsa grass, called darbhāsana, is prepared in the verandah or some convenient place outside the foundations of the house, and the dying man is placed on it. When life is extinct, the body is washed, dressed in a new white cloth, and placed on a bier made of bamboos covered with a new white cloth. The bier is then carried on the shoulders of four of the nearest relatives to the place of cremation within the compound of the illam, and laid on a pile of firewood, which must include some sandalwood. This should be done by brothers or sons if there are such; if not, by more distant relatives or friends. The pyre need not of necessity be prepared by Nambūtiris. Properly speaking, according to the sacred texts, which govern almost every act of the Nambūtiri's life, relatives and friends, male and female, should accompany the bier to the place of cremation, but, as a rule, women do not join the little procession. The bier is laid on the pyre, and the corpse is uncovered. Rice is scattered over the face by the blood-relations present, and small pieces of gold are thrust into the nine openings of the body, while mantras are recited by the Vādhyāyar or priest. The gold is said to be used on this occasion as part of the offering in the yāgam—the last sacrifice, as the burning of the body

is called—and not in any way to assist the deceased in his journey to "the undiscovered country." Soon after the bier is laid on the funeral pyre, a hōmam is made. Fire taken from it is placed on the chest of the deceased, and then the pyre is lighted in three places. The performer of the crematory rites carries an earthen pot round the pyre. The officiating priest punctures the pot with a knife, and receives the water in another pot. He throws this water on the pyre, and the pot is then smashed and flung away. This part of the ceremony is said to symbolise that the deceased has had his ablution in the water of the Ganges, and the fire god, Agni, represented by the hōmam, was witness to the same. The fire god is supposed to witness every ceremony enjoined by the Vēdas. After the body is burnt, those who attended go away and bathe. The disembodied soul is supposed to enter a body called Sūkshma Sarīra, and eventually goes to heaven or hell as it deserves. But, before it can reach its destination, certain ceremonies must be performed. These consist chiefly of oblations on each of the ten days following death, for the purpose of causing the prēta (spirit) to grow out of the Dhananjaya Vāyu, which causes deformities and changes in the deceased after death. Each day's ceremony completes a limb or part of the prēta, and the body is complete in ten days. On the third day after death, the ashes of the deceased are collected in an urn, and buried at the place of cremation or close to it. This is called ēkoddishta. On the eleventh day, all the members of the family go through a purificatory ceremony, which consists in swallowing the pānchagavya, and changing the sacred thread. They then perform a srāddha, offering balls of rice, etc., to the deceased and three of his ancestors, and give a dinner and presents of money and cloths

to Brāhmans. Twelve srāddhas must be performed, one in each month following, when water and balls of rice (pindas) are offered to the spirit. The twelfth srāddha is the sapindi karana, which elevates the spirit of the deceased to the rank of an ancestor. Following this, there is only the annual srāddha, or anniversary of death, calculated according to the lunar or astronomical year, when not less than three Brāhmans are fed, and receive presents of money and cloths.

Concerning the death ceremonies, Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "After death, the blood relations of the deceased bathe, and, with wet clothes on, place two pieces of the stem of the plantain tree, one at the head and the other at the feet of the corpse. The hair of the head and face is shaved a little, and the body is bathed with water in which turmeric and mailanchi, a red vegetable substance, are dissolved. The Vaishnavite gōpi mark is drawn vertically, as also are sandal paste marks on various parts of the body, and flowers and garlands are thrown over it. The corpse is then covered with an unbleached cloth, which is kept in position by a rope of kusa grass. It is carried to the pyre by Nambūtiris who are not within the pollution circle of the deceased, the eldest son supporting the head and the younger ones the legs. A cremation pit is dug in the south-east portion of the compound, and a mango tree, which has been felled, is used as fuel. In all these ceremonies, the eldest son is the karta or chief mourner and responsible ritualist, with whom the younger ones have to keep up physical contact while the several rites are being gone through. When the body is almost reduced to ashes, the principal performer of the ceremonies and his brothers bathe, and, taking some earth from the adjoining stream or tank, make with it a representation

of the deceased. Throughout the funeral ceremonies, the Mārān is an indispensable factor. The handing of the kusa grass and gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds for the oblation must be done by a member of that caste. Sanchayanam, or the collection and disposal of the burnt bones of the deceased, takes place on the fourth day. On the eleventh day the pollution ceases, and the daily srāddha begins. A term of dīksha or special observance is kept up for three fortnights, but generally for a whole year. On the twelfth day is the sapinda karana srāddha, or ceremony of what may be called joining the fathers, after which the dead person passes from the stage of preta to join the manes or spirits. There are then the monthly ceremonies (māsikas) and ashta srāddhas (eight srāddhas). The ābdika or first anniversary, known in Malabar by the name of māsam, is a very important ceremony, and one on which unstinted expenditure is the rule."

A further account of the death ceremonies is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "When death is believed to be near, the dying man is taken to the west of the hearth of the sacred fire (aupāsana agni), and laid with his head to the south on a bed of sand and darbha grass, while the ōttu mantram is whispered in his ear. When life is extinct, the body is washed and covered with a plantain leaf. The mourners dress themselves in tāttu fashion, and tear up a new cloth breadthwise into pieces called sesham, which they each wear round their waist. The body is then dressed in an undercloth; the forehead is smeared with the pounded root of the creeper mēttōni, and tulasi flowers are put on the head; the kudumi (hair knot) is untied, and the pūnūl (sacred thread) arranged to hang round the neck in front. The body is tied on to a bamboo ladder and covered with a new

cloth, and then carried by four of the nearest relatives to the place of cremation within the compound of the illam. A trench is dug on the north-east of the pyre, and some water put into it, which is sprinkled on the pyre with twigs of chamatha and darbha. The body is then laid on the pyre with the head to the south, and the fire is kindled. The ladder is thrown away, and a hōmam performed of ghee and darbha grass made to represent the deceased, while mantrams are recited. Then comes the ceremony called kumbhapradakshinam. The mourners go round the pyre three times, the eldest son leading the way, carrying an earthen pot of water on his left shoulder. The water should run through the bottom of the pot, one hole being made for the first round, two for the second, and three for the third, and other mourners should sprinkle it on the pyre. At the end of the third round the pot is thrown on to the pyre, and all the mourners come away, the eldest son leaving last, and being careful not to look back. After bathing and shaving, the sons and other persons entitled to celebrate the obsequies, each perform an oblation of water (udagakriya) to a piece of karuga grass stuck up to represent the spirit of the dead, concluding the ceremony by touching iron, granite, a firebrand, cow-dung, paddy and gold three times, throwing away the sesham, and receiving a clean cloth (māttu). They then return to the nadumittam, when they make offerings (bali or veli) of rice balls (pindams) to a piece of karuga grass. Both these ceremonies have to be repeated twice daily for ten days. On the fourth day after death, provided it is not a Tuesday or Friday, the ceremony of collecting the bones (sanchyanam) is performed. The eldest son goes to the pyre with a pāla (pot made of the spathe of an areca palm) of milk, which he sprinkles on the pyre

with a brush of chamatha tied with karuga grass. Three pālas are placed on the west of the pyre parallel to the places where the feet, waist and head of the corpse rested, and bones are removed from the feet, waist and head with tongs of chamatha, and placed in the respective pālas. The bones are then washed in milk, and all put into an earthen pot (kudam) with some karuga grass on the top. The pot is covered with a cloth, taken to a cocoanut tree and buried in a pit, the cloth being removed and the top filled with mud. A plantain is planted in the trench that was dug near the pyre. On the eleventh day, all the members of the family purify themselves, and perform oblations of water and balls of rice. This constitutes the first sraddha, which must be repeated on each anniversary of the eleventh day."

"The funeral rites of women are similar; but, if the woman is pregnant at the time of death, the body has first to be purified seven times with pounded kusa grass, cow-dung, cow's urine, ashes and gold, and to receive māttu. The belly is cut open four inches below the navel, and, if the child is found alive, it is taken out and brought up; if dead, it is put back in the womb with a piece of gold and some ghee. Children not more than ten days old are buried with little ceremony, but all others are burnt."*

When a Nambūtiri is believed to have been guilty of an offence against the caste, or when there is a caste dispute in any grāmam, the proper course is to represent the matter to the king (in Malabar the Zamorin), who refers it to the Smarta having jurisdiction over that particular grāmam, ordering him to try the offender after holding a proper enquiry. Minor offences are punishable

* The accounts of marriage and death ceremonies in the Gazetteer of Malabar are from a grandhavari.

by infliction of penance, fasting, or doing special pūja to the gods. Graver offences are dealt with by excommunication from the caste. Against the decision of the Smarta there is no appeal. Adultery between a Nambūtiri woman and a man of inferior caste is perhaps the most serious of all caste offences.

The enquiry into cases of adultery is described as follows by Mr. Subramani Aiyar. "It is conducted by the Smarta, and hence arises the name (smartavichāram) by which it is known. Whenever a Nambūtiri woman's chastity is suspected, she is at once handed over to society for enquiry, no considerations of personal affection or public policy intervening. The mother or brother may be the first and only spectator of a shady act, but feels no less bound to invite, and generally pay very heavily for a public enquiry by society according to its recognised rules. The suspect is at once transferred to an isolation shed in the same compound, variously called by the name of anchampura or fifth room (outside the nalukettu or quadrangle), or the pachchōlappura, a new shed with green thatch roofing put up for the occasion. She may be seen here by her husband, his father and uncles, her father, father's father, father's maternal grandfather, and their sons, but by none else. Once a prohibited member sees her, the brand of infamy indubitably settles on her, and the smārtavichāram is considered foreclosed. For beginning a smārtavichāram, the sanction of the ruling Rāja has to be obtained. The matter is carried to his ears, after a preliminary enquiry, called dāsivichāram, has been gone through. For this, the woman's male relations, in conjunction with the Brāhmans of the neighbourhood, interrogate the Dāsi or Nāyar maid-servant attached to the suspected woman. Along with the application for

royal sanction in Travancore, a fee of sixty-four fanams or nine rupees has to be sent in, and is credited to the treasury of Srī Padmanābha Swāmi, as whose deputy the Mahārāja is supposed to rule the country. The Mahārāja then appoints a Smārta (judge), two Mīmāmsakas, an Akakkoyimma, and a Purakkoyimma. The office of Smārta is hereditary. If a family becomes extinct, the Yōga or village union nominates another in its place. The Mīmāmsakas are Nambūtiris learned in the law, and their office is seldom hereditary. They are appointed to help the Smārta in his enquiries. The Akakkoyimma, or person whose business is to preserve order, holds his appointment by heredity. The Purakkoyimma is the proxy of the sovereign himself. In ancient days, and even so late as the time of the great Martānda Varma, the ruling sovereign himself was present during the trial, and preserved order. Now a deputy is sent by the Mahārāja. He is generally the magistrate of the tāluk, who, if he finds it inconvenient to attend the meeting, delegates the function to the chief village officer. The Smārta, when he receives the royal commission (neet) for holding the enquiry, receives from the woman's relations a small tribute of money (dakshina). The Mīmāmsakas, it may be observed, are selected by the Smārta. In Travancore alone is the Smārta's authority supreme, for no Vaidika lives in this territory, and none are generally invited. In other parts of Malabar, where Vaidikas live permanently, one of the six recognised Vaidikas has to accompany the Smārta to the place of the vichārana (enquiry), and the Smārta merely conducts the enquiry as the proxy of, and authorised and guided by the Vaidikas. Generally the council assembles at some neighbouring village temple. The suspected woman is placed within the anchampura,

and her maid-servant stands at the door. All questions are addressed to her, as the gōsha of the suspect has to be honoured in its entirety until the pronouncement of the final verdict. The procedure begins, not by the framing and reading out of a charge-sheet, but by arranging for the suspicion being brought to notice by the accused person herself. For this purpose, the Smārta makes a feint of entering the isolation shed, as if in ignorance of everything that has transpired. The maid-servant stops him, and informs him that her mistress is within. The Smārta, on hearing this, affects astonishment, and asks her the reason why her mistress should not be in the main building (antahpuram). With this question, the enquiry may be said to have actually begun. The next morning by eleven o'clock, the Smārta and his co-adjutors again go and stand beside the isolation hut, and, calling for the maid-servant, commence the regular enquiry. After about five o'clock in the afternoon, the Smārta, in the presence of the Akakkoyimma, relates the whole day's proceedings to the Mīmāmsakas, and takes their opinion as to the questions for the next day. The enquiry often lasts for months, and sometimes even for years. It is the most expensive undertaking possible, as the whole judicatory staff has to be maintained by the family, unless the sadhanam or subject gives a circumstantial confession of her guilt. It is not enough to plead guilty; she must point out all the persons who have been partakers in her guilt. Thus every day the Smārta asks "Are there any more?" After the completion of the enquiry, the council re-assembles at the village temple. The guardian of the suspect presents himself before the assembled Brāhmans, and makes the customary obeisance. The Smārta then recounts the details of the enquiry, and

ultimately pronounces his verdict. If the woman is declared innocent, she is re-accepted amidst universal rejoicings, and the head of the family feels amply repaid for the expenditure he has incurred in the reputation for chastity secured for a member of his family under such a severe ordeal. If things do not end so well, all the Brāhmans come out of the temple and re-assemble, when a Brāhman, who is usually not a Nambūtiri, as the Nambūtiris do not desire to condemn one of their own caste, stands up, and in a stentorian voice repeats the substance of the charge, and the judgment as given by the Smārta. The guardian of the woman then goes away, after she has been handed over by the Smārta to the custody of the Purakkoyimma. The guardian bathes, and performs all the funeral ceremonies for his ward, who from this moment is considered dead for all social and family purposes. The persons meanwhile, whose names have been given out by the woman as having been implicated in the offence, have to vindicate their character on pain of excommunication.

In connection with a case of adultery, which was tried recently in Malabar, it is noted that the Purakkoyimma kept order in the court with sword in hand. Īswara pūja (worship of Īswara) was performed in the local temple on all the days of the trial, and the suspected woman was given pānchagavya (five products of the cow) so that she might tell the truth.

I am informed that, in the course of an enquiry into a charge of adultery, "it sometimes happens that the woman names innocent men as her seducers. Two courses are then open to them, in order that they may exculpate themselves, viz., ordeal by boiling oil, and ordeal by weighing. The former of these ordeals is undergone, under the sanction of the Rāja, by the

accused person dipping his bare hand in ghī, which has been boiling from sunrise to midday, and taking out of it a bell-metal image. The hand is immediately bandaged, and if, on examination of it on the third day, it be found unharmed, the man is declared innocent. In the other ordeal, the man is made to sit for a certain time in one of a pair of scales, and is declared innocent or guilty, according as the scale ascends or descends. But these practices do not now prevail." In former days, the ordeal of boiling ghī was undergone at the temple of Suchīndram in Travancore. This temple derives its name from Indra, who, according to the legend, had illicit intercourse with Ahalya, the wife of Gautama Rishi, and had to undergo a similar ordeal at this place.

In connection with a case which came before the High Court of Madras, it is recorded * that "an enquiry was held into the conduct of a woman suspected. She confessed that the plaintiff had had illicit intercourse with her, and thereupon they were both declared out-casts, the plaintiff not having been charged, nor having had an opportunity to cross-examine the woman, or enter on his defence, and otherwise to vindicate his character. Held by the High Court that the declaration that the plaintiff was an outcast was illegal, and, it having been found that the defendants had not acted *bonâ fide* in making that declaration, the plaintiff was entitled to recover damages."

In order to mitigate to some extent the suffering caused by turning adrift a woman proved guilty of adultery, who has hitherto lived in seclusion, provision has been made by the Rāja of Cherakkal. A Tiyan named

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* Ind. Law Reports, Madras Series, XII, 1889.

Talliparamba possesses a large extent of land granted by a former Rāja of Cherakkal, on condition of his taking under his protection all excommunicated females, if they choose to go with him. He has special rank and privileges, and has the title of Mannanar. Whenever an inquiry takes place, Mannanar receives information of it, and his messengers are ready to take the woman away. It was the custom in former days for Mannanar's agents to lead the woman to near his house, and leave her at a certain place from which two roads lead to the house—one to the eastern gate, and the other to the northern. If the woman happened to enter the house by the eastern gate, she became Mannanar's wife, and, if she went in by the northern gate, she was considered to be his sister by adoption. This rule, however, is not strictly adhered to at the present day.

The Nambūtiris are stated by Mr. Subramani Aiyar to "belong to different sūtras, gōtras, or septs, and follow different Vēdas. The most important of the sūtras are Āsvalayana, Baudhāyana, Āpastamba, and Kaushitaka. The best-known gōtras are Kāsyapa, Bhargava, Bharadvāga, Vasishta, and Kausika. There are a few Sāmavēdins belonging to the Kitangnur and Panchal grāmams, but most of them are Rigvēdic, and some belong to the Yajurvēda. The Rigvēdic Brāhmans belong to two separate yōgas or unions, namely, Trichūr Yōga and Tirunavai Yōga. It appears that three of the most renowned of the disciples of Sankarāchārya were Nambūtiri Brāhmans, who received their initiation into the sanyāsāsrama at the great sage's hands. They established three maths or monasteries, known as the tekkematham (southern), natuvile matham (middle), and vatakke matham (northern). Succession having fallen in default in regard to the last, the property that stood

in its name lapsed to the Rāja of Cochin. Out of the funds of this matham, a Vēdic pāthasāla (boarding school) was established at Trichūr. A certain number of villagers became in time recognised as being entitled to instruction at this institution, and formed a yōga. Trichūr then became the centre of Brāhmanical learning. Later on, when the relations of the Zamorin of Calicut with the Rāja of Cochin became strained, he organised another yōga at Tirunavai for the Nambūtiris who lived within his territory. Here there are two yōgas for Rigvēdic Brāhmans. In these schools, religious instruction has been imparted with sustained attention for several centuries. The heads of these schools are recruited from the houses of Changngavot and Erkara, respectively. To these two yōgas two Vādhyārs and six Vaidikas are attached. There are also six Smartas or judges attached to these bodies. The Vādhyārs are purely religious instructors, and have no judicial duties in respect of society. The Vaidikas and Smartas are very learned in the Smritis, and it is with them that the whole caste government of the Nambūtiris absolutely rests."

The names of the Nambūtiris measured by Mr. Fawcett were as follows :—

Nīlakantan.	Bhavasarman.
Paramēsvaran.	Nandi.
Rāman.	Kubēran.
Harijayandan.	Mādhavan.
Chandrasēkharan.	Anantan.
Vāsudēvan.	Nambiātan.
Grēni.	Shannan.
Dāmōdaran.	Krishnan.
Sivadāsan.	Sankaran.
Mahēsvaran.	

In connection with the names of Nambūtiris, Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "A list of names

not current or unusual now among other Brāhman communities in Southern India may be interesting. These are—

Vishnu.	Kadamban.
Gayantan.	Chitran.
Dēvadattan.	Gadavēdan.
Kiratan.	Bhavadāsan.
Prabhākaran.	Srikumāran.
Dattareyan.	

"The conspicuous absence of the names of the third son of Siva (Sasta), such as Hariharaputra and Budhanatha, may be noted. Nor are the names of Ganapathi much in favour with them. Srīdēvi and Sāvitri are the two most common names, by which Nambūtiri females are known. There are also certain other names of a Prākrita or non-classic character, used to denote males and females, which sometimes border on the humorous. Among these are—

Males.	*Females.*
Nampiyattan.	Nangngaya.
Ittiyattan.	Nangngeli.
Uzhutran.	Pappi.
Tuppan.	Ittichchiri.
Nampotta.	Unnima.
	Chiruta.

"Some names in this list are identifiable with the names of divinities and purānic personages. For example, Uzhutran is a corruption of Rudran. In the same manner, Tuppan is the Prakrit for Subramanya, and Chiruta for Sīta. Unnima is another name for Uma or Parvati. Nambūtiris grudge to grant the title of Nambūtiri to each other. For instance, the Tamarasseri Nambūtiri calls the Mullappalli Nambūtiri merely Mullapalli (house name). But, if the person addressed is an Ādhya of one of the eight houses, or at least a

Tantri Ādhya, the title Nambūtiri is added to his name. Again, if there are in a house two Nambūtiris, one of them being the father and the other the son, the father, whenever he writes, subscribes himself as the Achchan Nambūtiri or father Nambūtiri, while the son subscribes himself as the Makan or son Nambūtiri. In Malabar there were two poets called Venmani Achchan Nambūtiri and Venmani Makan Nambūtiri, venmani signifying the name of the illam. It is only in documents and other serious papers that the proper name or sarman of the Nambutiri would be found mentioned."

When addressing each other, Nambūtiris use the names of their respective illams or manas. When a Nambūtiri is talking with a Nāyar, or indeed with one of any other caste, the manner in which the conversation must be carried on, strictly according to custom, is such that the Nambūtiri's superiority is apparent at every turn. Thus, a Nāyar, addressing a Nambūtiri, must speak of himself as foot-servant. If he mentions his rice, he must not call it rice, but his gritty rice. Rupees must be called his copper coins, not his rupees. He must call his house his dung-pit. He must speak of the Nambūtiri's rice as his raw rice, his coppers as rupees, and his house as his illam or mana. The Nāyar must not call his cloth a cloth, but an old cloth or a spider's web. But the Nambūtiri's cloth is to be called his daily white cloth, or his superior cloth. The Nāyar, speaking of his bathing, says that he drenches himself with water, whereas the Nambūtiri sports in the water when he bathes. Should he speak of eating or drinking, the Nāyar must say of himself that he takes food, or treats himself to the water in which rice has been washed. But, should he speak of the Nambūtiri eating, he must say that he tastes ambrosia. The Nāyar calls his sleeping

lying flat, and the Nambūtiri's closing his eyes, or resting like a Rāja. The Nāyar must speak of his own death as the falling of a forest, but of the Nambūtiri's as entering fire. The Nambūtiri is not shaved by the barber ; his hairs are cut. He is not angry, but merely dissatisfied. He does not clean his teeth as the Nāyar ; he cleans his superior pearls. Nor does he laugh ; he displays his superior pearls.

Concerning the recreations and pastimes of the Nambūtiris, Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "During the intervals of Vēdic or Purānic recitations, the Nambūtiri engages himself in chaturangam or chess. When the players are equally matched, a game may last five, six, or even seven days. Another amusement, which the Nambūtiris take a great interest in, is the Yatrakali, which is said to be a corruption of Sastrakali, a performance relating to weapons. This is a unique institution, kept up by a section of the Nambūtiris, who are believed to represent the Brāhmanical army of Parasu Rāma. When, at a ceremony in the Travancore royal household, a Yatrakali is performed, the parties have to be received at the entrance of the Mahārāja's palace in state, sword in hand. The dress and songs are peculiar. In its import, the performance seems to combine the propitiation of Siva and Parvati in the manner indicated in a tradition at Trikkariyūr with exorcism and skill in swordsmanship. It is generally believed that, in ancient days, the Brāhmans themselves ruled Kērala. When they found it necessary to have a separate king, one Attakat Nambūtiri was deputed, with a few other Brāhmans, to go and obtain a ruler from the adjoining Chēra territory. The only pass in those days, connecting Malabar and Coimbatore, was that which is now known as Nerumangalam. When the Nambūtiris were returning through

this pass with the ruler whom they had secured from the Chēra King, a strange light was observed on the adjacent hills. Two young Brāhmans of Chengngamanat village, on proceeding towards the hill to investigate the source thereof, found to their amazement that it was none other than Srī Bhagavati, the consort of Siva, who enjoined them to go, *viâ* Trikkariyūr, to Kodungngnallūr, the capital of the Perumāls. Seeing that the sight of Bhagavati foretold prosperity, the king called the range of hills Nerumangalam or true bliss, and made an endowment of all the surrounding land to the Brāhman village of Chengngamanat, the members of which had the good fortune to see the goddess face to face. When they entered the temple of Trikkariyūr, a voice was heard to exclaim "Chēra Perumāl," which meant that into that town, where Parasu Rāma was believed to be dwelling, no Perumāl (king) should ever enter—a traditional injunction still respected by the Malabar Kshatriyas. At this place, the sixth Perumāl who, according to a tradition, had a pronounced predilection for the Bouddha religion (Islamism or Buddhism, we cannot say), called a meeting of the Brāhmans, and told them that a religious discussion should be held between them and the Bouddhas, in view to deciding their relative superiority. The presiding deity of the local Saiva shrine was then propitiated by the Brāhmans, to enable them to come out victorious from the trial. A Gangama saint appeared before them, and taught them a hymn called nālupadam (four feet or parts of a slōka) which the Nambūtiris say is extracted from the Samavēda. The saint further advised them to take out a lamp from within the temple, which according to tradition had existed from the time of Srī Rāma, to a room built on the western ghāt of the temple tank, and pray to Siva in

terms of the hymn. While this was continued for forty-one days, six Brāhmans, with Mayura Bhatta at their head, arrived from the east coast to the succour of the Nambūtiris. With the help of these Brāhmans, the Nambūtiris kept up a protracted discussion with the Bouddhas. Wishing to bring it to a close, the Perumāl thought of applying a practical test. He enclosed a snake within a pot, and asked the disputants to declare its contents. The Bouddhas came out first with the correct answer, while the Brāhmans followed by saying that it was a lotus flower. The Perumāl was, of course, pleased with the Bouddhas; but, when the pot was opened, it was found to contain a lotus flower instead of a snake. The Bouddhas felt themselves defeated, and ever afterwards the nālupadam hymn has been sung by the Nambūtiris with a view to securing a variety of objects, every one of which they expect to obtain by this means. It is also said that, when the Brāhmans were propitiating Siva at Trikkariyūr, diverse spirits and angels were found amusing Parvati with their quips and cranks. A voice from heaven was then heard to say that such frolics should thereafter form part of the worship of Siva.

"Engaged in these socio-religious performances are eighteen sanghas or associations. The chief office-bearers are the Vakyavritti who is the chief person, and must be an Ottu Nambūtiri or a Numbūtiri with full Vēdic knowledge; the Parishakkaran who holds charge of the Yatrakali paraphernalia; and the guru or instructor. The chief household divinities of these soldier Nambūtiris are Bhadrakāli, Sasta, and Subrahmanya. On the evening of the Yatrakali day, these Brāhmans assemble round the lamp, and recite the nālupadam and a few hymns in praise of their household divinities, and

especially of Siva, the saviour who manifested himself at Trikkariyūr. On the night of the performance they are entertained at supper, when they sing certain songs called Karislōka. They then move in slow procession to the kalam or hall, singing specially songs in the vallappattu metre, with the sacred thread hanging vertically round the neck (apiviti), and not diagonally as is the orthodox fashion. In the hall have been placed a burning lamp in the centre, a para (Malabar measure) filled with paddy, a number of bunches of cocoanuts, plantain fruits, and various kinds of flowers. The Brāhmans sit in a circle round the lamp, and, after preliminary invocations to Ganapathi, sing songs in praise of Siva. After this various kinds of dumb-show are performed, and this is the time for exhibiting skill in swordsmanship. The exorcising, by the waving of a lighted torch before the face of the host, of any evil spirits that may have attached themselves is then gone through. The performance ends with a prayer to Bhagavati, that she will shower every prosperity. Following close upon this, a variety entertainment is sometimes given by the Yatrakali Nambūtiris. This old institution is still in great favour in British Malabar, and, as it has a religious aspect intertwined with it, it is not likely to be swept away by the unsparing broom of the so-called parishkarakalam or reforming age of modern India.

"The Kathakali, or national drama of Malabar, is held in great esteem and favour by the Nambūtiris. Most of them are conversant with the songs and shows relating to it, and severely criticise the slightest fault or failure. The Kathakali is more than three centuries old in Malabar, and is said to have been first brought into existence by a member of the ancient ruling house of

Kottarakkara. As the earliest theme represented was the Rāmayana, the Kathakali is also known as Rāmanāttam. A single play lasts for eight and even ten hours in the night. Kshatriyas, Asuras, Rākshasas, Kirātas (hunting tribes), monkeys, birds, etc., each has an appropriate make-up. The play is in dumb-show, and no character is permitted to speak on the stage. The songs are sung by the Bhāgavatar or songster, and the actors literally act, and do nothing more. The Nambūtiris love this antiquated form of theatrical performance, and patronise it to a remarkable extent.

"There are a number of other recreations of an entirely non-religious character. The chief of these are called respectively seven dogs and the leopard, fifteen dogs and the leopard, and twenty-eight dogs and the leopard. Success in these games consists in so arranging the dogs as to form a thick phalanx, two abreast, round the leopard. Stones of two sizes are employed to represent the dogs and leopards, and the field is drawn on the ground.

"The ezahmattukali, or seventh amusement, is said to have been so called from the fact of its being introduced by the seventh Nambūtiri grāmam of Kērala. It is a miniature form of Yatrakali, but without its *quasi*-religious character, and is intended to serve merely as a social pastime. The players need not all be Brāhmans; nor is fasting or any religious discipline part of the preliminary programme. Sitting round the lamp as at the Yatrakali, and reciting songs in praise of Siva, the players proceed to the characteristic portion of the recreation, which is a kind of competition in quick-wittedness and memory held between two yogas or parties. One among them calls himself the Kallur Nāyar

and is the presiding judge. There is interrogation and answering by two persons, and a third proclaims the mistakes in the answers. There are two others, who serve as bailiffs to execute the judge's orders. Humorous scenes are then introduced, such as Ittikkantappan Nāyar, Prakkal, Mutti or old woman, Pattar or Paradēsa Brāhman, and other characters, who appear on the stage and amuse the assembly."

The Nambūtiris are Vēdic Brāhmans: their scriptures are the Vēdas. It is safe to say that the Nambūtiris are Shaivas, but not to the exclusion of Vishnu. The ordinary South Indian Vaishnava Brāhman has nothing to do with the Shaiva temple over the way, and takes no part or interest in the Shaiva festivals. Siva is to the Nambūtiri the supreme deity, but he has temples also to Vishnu, Krishna, Narasimha, Srī Rāghava, Ganapathi, Subrahmanya, Bhagavati, etc. There are said to be temples to Sāstavu and Sankarnārāyanan—amalgamated forms of Siva and Vishnu. The lingam is the ordinary object of worship.

Like all Brāhmans, the Nambūtiris believe that the eight directions or points of the compass, north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, are presided over by eight deities, or Ashtadikpālakas, riding on various animals. Indra reigns in heaven and Yama in hell, and Surya is the sun god. All these and their wives are worshipped. Parvati shares adoration with Siva, Lakshmi with Vishnu, and so on. The Nambūtiris believe in the existence of evil spirits which influence man, but they do not worship them.

It is said that the Nambūtiri has of late been influenced by Vēdāntism, that wonderful religious idea of the existence of one spirit or atman, the only reality, outside which the world and all besides is mere illusion,

and whose doctrine is wrapped up in the three words "Ekam ēva advitīyam". (There is but one being without a second).

The Nambūtiris call themselves Ārya Brāhmanar. Their legendary transmigration to Malabar from Northern India is doubtless true. Theirs is by far the purest form of the Vēdic Brāhmanism to be met with in Southern India. A complete account of the religion of the Nambūtiris cannot be given in these pages. The Nambūtiri's life is a round of sacrifices, the last of which is the burning of his body on the funeral pyre. When the Nambūtiri has no male issue, he performs the putra kāmēshti or karmavipākaprayaschittam yāgams or sacrifices to obtain it. Should he be unwell, he performs the mrittyunjaya sānti yāgam, so that he may be restored to good health. He performs the aja yāgam, or goat sacrifice, in order to obtain salvation. Though animal food is strictly forbidden, and the rule is strictly followed, the flesh of the goat, which remains after the offering has been made in this sacrifice, is eaten by the Nambūtiris present as part of the solemn ceremonial. This is the only occasion on which animal food is eaten. Namaskāram, or prostration, is much done during prayers. By some it is done some hundreds of times daily, by others not so often. It amounts to physical exercise, and is calculated to strengthen the arms and the back.

Reference has already been made to certain ceremonies connected with pregnancy, and the early life of a child. There are three further important ceremonies, called Upanāyana, Samāvartana and Upākarma, concerning which Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "Upanāyana may be called the Brāhmanising ceremony. An oft-repeated Sanskrit verse runs to the

effect that a Brāhman is a Brāhman by virtue of his karmas or actions in this life, or the lives preceding it. The meaning of the term Upanāyana is a ceremony which leads one to god, *i.e.*, to a realisation of the eternal self through the aid of a guru (preceptor). This ceremony takes place in the seventh, eighth, or ninth year of a boy's life. As ordinarily understood, it is a ceremony for males only, as they alone have to observe the four asramas. But, in ancient days, it seems to have been performed also by females. Marriage was not compulsory, and a girl might take to asceticism at once. Sīta is said to have worn a yāgnopavitam (sacred thread). A Brāhman is not born, but made by the karmas. In other words, a Brāhman boy is, at the time of his birth, only a Sūdra, and it is by the performance of the necessary karmas—not merely the ceremonial rites, but the disciplinary and preparatory process in view to spiritual development—that he becomes a Dviga or twice-born. The word Upanāyana is composed of upa, meaning near, and nayana, leading. What the youth is led to is, according to some, Brāhmaggnana or the realisation of the eternal and universal self, and according to others only the teacher or guru. A Nambūtiri Upanāyana begins with the presentation of a dakshīna (consolidated fee) to the Ezhuttachchan, or the Nāyar or Ambalavāsi teacher, who has been instructing the youth in the vernacular. The boy stands on the western side of the sacrificial fire, facing the east, and the father stands beside him, facing the same way. The second cloth (uttariya) is thrown over the boy's head, and his right hand being held up, the sacred thread, to which a strap made from the skin of a Krishnamriga (antelope) is attached, is thrown over his shoulders and under his right arm, while he stands reverently with

closed eyes. The thread and skin are wrapped up in the cloth, and are not to be seen by the boy. He is then taken to an open place, where the priest introduces the new Brahmachāri to the sun, and invokes him to cover his pupil with his rays. The boy next goes to the sacrificial altar, and himself offers certain sacrifices to the fire. Saluting his preceptor and obtaining his blessing, he requests that he may be initiated into the Sāvitrimantram. After a few preliminary ceremonies, the guru utters in the right ear of his disciple the sacred syllable Ōm, and repeats the Gāyatri mantram nine times. He then instructs him in certain maxims of conduct, which he is to cherish and revere throughout the Brahmachārya stage. Addressing the boy, the guru says, 'You have become entitled to the study of the Vēdas; perform all the duties which pertain to the āsrama you are about to enter. Never sleep during the day. Study the Vēdas by resigning yourself to the care of your spiritual instructor.' These exhortations, though made in Sanskrit, are explained in Malayālam, in order that the boy may understand them—a feature unknown to Brāhmans on the other coast. With his words of advice, the preceptor gives the youth a danda or stick made of pīpal (*Ficus religiosa*) wood, as if to keep him in perpetual memory of what would follow if any of the directions be disregarded. The boy then makes his obeisance to his parents and all his relations, and is given a brass vessel called bhikshāpātra (alms pot), in which he collects, by house-to-house visits, food for his daily sustenance during the Brahmachārya stage. He proceeds to the kitchen of his own house with the vessel in one hand and the stick in the other. Making his obeisance in due form to his mother, who stands facing the east, he says 'Bhikshām bhavati dadātu' (May you be pleased to give me

alms). The mother places five or seven handfuls of rice in the vessel. After receiving similar contributions from the assembled elders, the boy takes the vessel to his father, who is the first guru, saying 'Bhaikshmāmidam' (This is my alms collection). The father blesses it, and says 'May it be good.' After the Gayatrijapa, the ceremony of Samidadhana is performed. This is the Brahmachāri's daily worship of the sacred fire, corresponding to the aupasana of the Grihastha, and has to be performed twice daily. After another hōmam at night, the cloth covering the sacred thread and skin is removed, and the consecration of the food is done for the first time. In addition to the skin strap, the Brahmachāri wears a mekhala or twisted string of kūsa grass. It is doubtless of the youthful Nambūtiri that Barbosa wrote as follows at the beginning of the sixteenth century. 'And when these are seven years old, they put round their necks a strap two fingers in width of an animal which they call cresnamergan, and they command him not to eat betel for seven years, and all this time he wears that strap round the neck, passing under the arm; and, when he reaches fourteen years of age, they make him a Brāhman, removing from him the leather strap round his neck, and putting on another three-thread, which he wears all his life as a mark of being a Brāhman.' The rules which were observed with such strictness centuries ago are still observed, and every Nambūtiri boy goes through his period of Brahmachārya, which lasts at least for full five years. During the whole of this period, no sandal paste, no scents, and no flowers are to be used by him. He is not to take his meals at other houses on festive occasions. He must not sleep during the day. Nor may he wear a loin-cloth in the ordinary fashion. Shoes and umbrella are also prohibited. The completion of the Brahmachāri

āsrama, or stage of pupilage, is called Samāvartana. After a few religious ceremonies in the morning, the Brahmachāri shaves for the first time since the Upanāyana ceremonies, casts off the skin strap and mekhala, and bathes. He puts on sandal paste marks, bedecks himself with jasmine flowers, and puts on shoes. He then holds an umbrella, and wears a pearl necklace. After this, he puts on a head-dress, and a few other ceremonials conclude the Samāvartana. For three days subsequent to this, the budding Grihastha is considered ceremonially impure, and the pollution is perhaps based on the death of the old āsrama, and birth of the new. In the Upākarma ceremony, hymns are sung by the preceptor, and the pupil has merely to listen to them."

In conclusion, something may be said concerning the general beliefs of the Nambūtiris. All objects, animate or inanimate, organic or inorganic, are believed to be permeated by the divine spirit. Animals, trees, plants, and flowers are animate, and therefore venerated. The sun, moon, and stars are revered on account of some inherent quality in each, such as utility or strength, or owing to their connection with some deity. A god can assume any form at any time, such as that of a man, bird, beast, or tree. The various forms in which a god has appeared are ever sacred. Some animals have been used as vehicles by the gods, and are therefore revered. Cows, horses, and snakes are worshipped. The cow is the most sacred of all animals. The Purānas tell of Kāmadhēnu, the cow of plenty, one of the fourteen useful things which turned up out of the ocean of milk when it was churned, and which is supposed to have yielded the gods all they desired. So Kāmadhēnu is one who gives anything which is desired. Every hair of the cow is sacred, its urine is the most holy water, and its dung the

most purificatory substance. The horse is the favourite animal of Kubēra, the treasure-god. The Uchchaisravas, the high-eared prototype of all horses, also came out of the churned ocean. Horse sacrifice, or Asvamēdha, is the greatest of all sacrifices. Performance of a hundred of them would give the sacrificer power to displace Indra, in order to make room for him. Snakes are the fruitful progeny of the sage Kāsyapa and Kadru. The Mahā Sēsha, their prince, is the couch and canopy of Vishnu, and supports the world on his thousand heads. But attention to snakes is probably more in the light of the harm which they may do, and propitiatory in character.

Among plants, the tulasi or sacred basil (*Ocimum sanctum*) is the most sacred of all. It is supposed to be pervaded by the essence of both Vishnu and Lakshmi: according to some legends, it is a metamorphosis of Sīta and Rukmini. The daily prayer offered to the tulasi is thus rendered by Monier Williams. "I adore that tulasi in whose roots are all the sacred places of pilgrimage, in whose centre are all the deities, and in whose upper branches are all the Vēdas." The udumbara (*Ficus glomerata*) is also sacred. Under this tree Dattatreya, the incarnation of the Trinity, performed his ascetic austerities. The Nambūtiri says that, according to the sāstras, there must be one of these trees in his compound, and, if it is not there, he imagines it is. The bilva (*Ægle Marmelos*) is specially sacred to Siva all over Southern India. To the Nambūtiri it is very sacred. Its leaves are supposed to represent the three attributes of Siva—Satva, Rāja, and Tama—and also his three eyes and his trisūlam (trident). They are used by the Nambūtiri in propitiatory ceremonies to that god. An offering of a single leaf of this tree is believed to annihilate the sins done three births or existence. Kūsa grass (*Eragrostis*

cynosuroides) is very sacred, and used in many ceremonies. At the churning of the ocean, the snakes are said to have been greedy enough to lick the nectar off the kūsa grass, and got their tongues split in consequence. The asvaththa (*Ficus religiosa*) is also very sacred to the Nambūtiris. It is supposed to be pervaded by the spirit of Brahma the Creator.

From the sun (Sūrya, the sun-god) emanate light and heat, and to its powers all vegetation is due, so the Nambūtiri worships it daily. He also offers pūja to the sun and moon as belonging to the nine navagrāhas (planets). The planets are the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Rāhu and Kētu. They influence the destinies of men, and therefore come in for some worship. The three last are sinister in their effects, and must be propitiated.

Nāmdēv.—A synonym of Rangāri.

Nanchi Kuruva.—A name for Kuruvas, who inhabit Nanchinād in Travancore.

Nanchinād Vellāla.—The Nanchinād Vellālas, to the number of 18,000, are found scattered all over Travancore, though their chief centre is Nanchinād, composed of the tāluks of Tovala and Agastisvaram. Their manners and customs at the present day are so different to those of the Tamil Vellālas that they may be regarded as a separate caste indigenous to Travancore and Cochin. Like other Sūdras of Travancore, they add the title Pillai to their name, which is often preceded by the title Kannaku.

From a copper-plate grant in the possession of the Syrian Christians, dated A.D. 824, we learn that one family of carpenters, and four families of Vellālas, were entrusted with the growing of plants on the sea-coast, the latter being the Karalars or trustees. From this it

appears that the Vellālas must have settled on the west coast in the ninth century at the latest. The Nanchinād Vellālas were not originally different from their Pāndyan analogues, but settled in the tāluks above mentioned, over which the Pāndyans held sway during several periods in mediæval times. On one occasion, when there was a dispute about the territorial jurisdiction of Nanchinād between the Mahārāja of Travancore and the Pāndyan ruler, the leading Vellālas of these tāluks went over in a body to the Travancore camp, and swore allegiance to the Travancore throne. They gradually renounced even the law of inheritance, which their brethren of the Tamil country followed, and adopted many novel customs, which they found prevalent in Kērala. From Nanchinād the caste spread in all directions, and, as most of them were respectable men with good education and mathematical training, their services were utilised for account-keeping in the civil and military departments of the State. They must, of course, be clearly distinguished from the Tamil makkathāyam Vellālas of Kuttamperūr in Tiruvella, who have also become naturalised in Travancore.

For the following note, I am indebted to Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar.

Like the Tamil Vellālas, the Nanchinād Vellālas are divided into two classes, Saiva and Asaiva, of which the former abstain from flesh and fish, while the latter have no such scruple. Asaivas will take food in the houses of Saivas, but the Saivas cook their own food when they go to an Asaiva house. Again, though the Saivas marry girls from Asaiva families, they are taught the Saiva hymn by the Gurukal immediately afterwards, and prohibited from dining with their former relatives. This custom is, however, only known to prevail in the south.

While the Vellālas in the south reside in streets, their brethren in the north live, like Nāyars, in isolated houses. In their dress and ornaments, too, the Nanchinād Vellālas living in North Travancore differ from those of the south, inasmuch as they adopt the practice of the Nāyars, while the latter are conservative, and true to their old traditions.

The Nanchinād Vellālas are well known, throughout Travancore, for their thrift, industry, and mathematical acumen. Several families have dropped the designation of Vellāla, and adopted Nanchinād Nāyar as their caste-name.

Their language is largely mixed up with Malayālam words and phrases. Madan Isakki (Yakshi) and Inan are their recognised tutelary deities, and were till recently worshipped in every household. Villati-chānpāttu is a common propitiatory song, sung by members of the goldsmith and oilmonger castes, in connection with the ceremonies of the Nanchinād Vellālas. It deals with the origin of these minor deities, and relates the circumstances in which their images were set up in various shrines. Amman-kodai, or offering to the mother, is the most important religious festival. They also observe the Tye-pongal, Depāvali, Trikkartikai, Ōnam and Vishu festivals. The anniversary of ancestors is celebrated, and the Pattukkai ceremony of the Tamil Vellālas, in propitiation of deceased female ancestors, is performed every year. Stories of Chitragupta, the accountant-general of Yama, the Indian Pluto, are recited on the new-moon day in the month of Chittiray (April-May) with great devotion.

The Nanchinād Vellālas are chiefly an agricultural class, having their own village organisation, with office-bearers such as kariyasthan or secretary, mutalpiti or

treasurer, and the pilla or accountant. Contributions towards village funds are made on certain ceremonial occasions. Their high priest belongs to the Umayoru-bhagam mutt of Kumbakonam, and the North Travancore Vellālas recognise the Pānantitta Gurukal as their spiritual adviser. East coast Brāhmans often officiate as their priests, and perform the sacrificial and other rites at weddings.

The usual rule is for girls to marry after puberty, but early marriage is not rare. The maternal uncle's or paternal aunt's daughter is regarded as the legitimate bride. The presents to the bridegroom include a mundu and neriyatu, the ordinary Malabar dress, and very often an iron writing-style and knife. This is said to be symbolical of the fact that the Vellālas formed the accountant caste of Travancore, and that several families of them were invited from Madura and Tinnevelly to settle down in Nanchinād for this purpose. A procession of the bridal couple in a palanquin through the streets is a necessary item of the marriage festivities. The Nanchinād Vellālas contract temporary alliances with Nāyar women from the Padamangalam section downwards. Divorce is permitted, provided a formal release-deed, or vidu-muri, is executed by the husband. After this, the woman may enter into sambandham (connection) with a Nanchinād or Pāndi Vellāla.

The laws of inheritance are a curious blend of the makkathāyam and marumakkathāyam systems. Sons are entitled to a portion of the property, not exceeding a fourth, of the self-acquired property of the father, and also a fourth of what would have descended to him in a makkathāyam family. This is called ukantutama, because it is property given out of love as opposed to right. It is a further rule that, in case of divorce, the

wife and children should be given this ukantutama, lest they should be left in utter destitution, only a tenth part of the ancestral property being allotted for this purpose, if her husband leaves no separate estate. If more than a fourth of the estate is to be given in this manner, the permission of the heirs in the female line has generally to be obtained. If a man dies without issue, and leaves his wife too old or unwilling to enter into a fresh matrimonial alliance, she is entitled to maintenance out of his estate. A divorced woman, if without issue, is similarly entitled to maintenance during the life of her former husband. The property to which she may thus lay claim is known as nankutama, meaning the property of the nanka or woman. The nankutama cannot be claimed by the widow, if, at the time of her husband's death, she does not live with, and make herself useful to him. When a widow enters into a sambandham alliance, the second husband has to execute a deed called etuppu, agreeing to pay her, either at the time of his death or divorce, a specified sum of money. The ukantutama from the family of her first husband does not go to the issue of a woman who is in possession of an etuppu deed.

The namakarana, or name-giving ceremony, is performed in early life. Many of the names are unknown among Nāyars, *e.g.*, Siva, Vishnu, Kuttalalingam, Subramanya, Ponnampalam among males, and Sivakami, Kantimati among females. The tonsure is performed before a boy is three years old. The right of performing the funeral ceremonies is vested in the son, or, failing one, the nephew. Pollution lasts for sixteen days. The karta (chief mourner) has to get himself completely shaved, and wears the sacred thread throughout the period of pollution, or at least on the sixteenth day. On

that day oblations of cooked food, water and gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds are offered to the departed. If a daughter's son dies, her mother, and not the father, observes pollution.

Nānchinād Vellāla has been assumed by males of the Dēva-dāsi caste in Travancore.

Nandikattu (bull's mouth).—An exogamous sept of Mēdara.

Nandimandalam.—A sub-division of Rāzu.

Nanga (naked).—A sub-division of Poroja.

Nangudi Vellāla.—The so-called Nangudi Vellālas, or Savalai Pillais, are found inhabiting several villages in the Tinnevelly district, and differ from other Vellālas in several important points. They say that they are Kōttai (fort) Vellālas, who have given up the custom of living within a fort. Nangudi women are not allowed to enter the fort at Srivaiguntam, wherein the Kōttai Vellālas live. Within the last few years, marriages are said to have taken place between members of the two communities. The Nangudis have exogamous septs or kilais, named for the most part after persons or deities, which, like the septs of the Maravans, run in the female line. The hereditary caste headman is called Pattaththu Pillai. In olden times, members who disobeyed him were made to run through the streets with a rotten tender cocoanut tied to the kudumi (hair knot), while a man ran behind, applying a tamarind switch to the back.

The consent of a girl's maternal uncle and his wife is necessary, before she can marry. The aunt's consent is signified by touching the tāli (marriage badge) on the wedding day. The uncle keeps a light, called ayira panthi, burning until the time for tying the tāli. A quarter measure of rice is tied up in a cloth, and the

knot converted into a wick, which is fed with ghī (clarified butter).

The news of a death in the community is conveyed by the barber. Before the removal of the corpse, all close relations, and at least one pair of Nangudis from every village, must come to the house. Absence on this occasion is considered as a very grave insult. On the second day after death, an *Amarantus*, called arakkirai, must be cooked.

A special feature in connection with inheritance is that a man should give his daughters some property, and every daughter must be given a house. The husbands have to live in their wives' houses. The property which a woman receives from her father becomes eventually the property of her daughters, and her sons have no claim to it. Sons inherit the property of the father in the usual manner.

Like the Kondaikatti Vellālas, the Nangudis claim that they had the right of placing the crown on the head of the Pāndyan kings. In the village of Korkai, there is a tank (pond) called Kannimar Jonai, because celestial maidens used to bathe there. When one Agni Mahā Rishi was doing penance, three of the celestial maidens are said to have come to bathe. The Rishi fell in love with them, and eventually three sons were born. These children were brought up by the Vellālas of Korkai at the request of the Rishi, who represented that they were likely to become kings. According to the legend, they became Chēra, Chōla, and Pāndya kings.

Nannūru (four hundred).—An exogamous sept of Mādiga.

Nantunikkuruppu.—Recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as a synonym of Vātti, a sub-division of Nāyar.

Nanukonda.—A sub-division of Lingāyat Kāpus, named after the village of Nanukonda in the Kurnool district.

Naravidyavāru.—These are Vipravinōdis, who are Jangams by caste. They style themselves Naravidyavāru when they perform acrobatic and other feats before ordinary people, and Vipravinōdi when they perform before Brāhmans. The name Naravidyavāru is said to be a contraction of Narulu-mēchche-vidya-cheyu-vāru, *i.e.*, those who receive the approbation of men. One of their most favourite feats is throwing three or four wooden or stone balls up into the air, and rolling them quickly in succession over various parts of the body—arms, chest, etc.

Nariangal (nari, jackal).—An exogamous sept of Vallamban.

Nārikēla (cocoanut).—An exogamous sept of Balija.

Narollu (fibre).—An exogamous sept of Pedakanti Kāpu.

Narpathu Katchi (forty-house section).—A sub-division of Valluvan.

Nasrāni Māppilla.—A name, in Malabar, applied to Christians.

Nāsuvan.—Nāsivan or Nāsuvan, said to mean unholy, one who should not be touched, or one sprung from the nose, is the name for Ambattans (Tamil barbers). The equivalents Nāsiyan and Nāvidan occur as a name for Telugu barbers, and Malayāli barbers who shave Nāyars and higher castes. Nāvidan is further recorded as the occupational name of a sub-division of Tamil Paraiyans, and Vēttuvans.

Natamukki.—Recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as a sub-division of Nāyar.

Naththalu (snails).—An exogamous sept of Māla.

Natramiludaiyan.—A name, meaning the repository of chaste Tamil, returned by some Nattamāns at times of census.

Nāttān.—At the Census, 1901, nearly 12,000 individuals returned themselves as Nāttān, which is stated by the Census Superintendent to be "a vague term meaning people of the country, reported by some to be a main caste, and by others to be a sub-caste of Vellāla. Nearly all of those who returned the name came from Salem and were cultivators, but some of them entered themselves as possessing the title of Sērvai, which usually denotes an Agamudaiyan" (*see* Sērvai, Sērvaikāran). Nāttān also occurs as a title of the Tamil Sembadavan and Pattanavan fishing castes, and of the Vallambans. Portions of the Tamil country are divided into areas known as nādus, in each of which certain castes, known as Nāttān or Nāttar, are the predominant element. For example, the Vallambans and Kallans are called the Nāttars of the Pālaya Nādu in the Sivaganga zamindari of the Madura district. In dealing with the tribal affairs of the various castes inhabiting a particular nādu, the lead is taken by the Nāttars.

Nattāti (the name of a village).—A sub-division of Shānān.

Nāttu (sons of the soil).—Recorded as a sub-division of Kallan, and of the Malayans of Cochin.

Nattukattāda Nāyanmar.—A class of mendicants attached to the Kaikōlans (*q.v.*).

Nāttukōttai Chetti.—"Of all the Chettis," Mr. Francis writes,* "perhaps the most distinctive and interesting are the Nāttukōttai Chettis, who are wealthy money-lenders with head-quarters in the Tiruppattūr

* Madras Census Report, 1901.

and Dēvakōttai divisions of the Sivaganga and Rāmnād zamindaris in the Madura district. They are the most go-a-head of all the trading castes in the south, travelling freely to Burma, the Straits Settlements and Ceylon (also Saigon, Mauritius, and South Africa), and having in some cases correspondents in London and on the Continent. As long as their father is alive, the members of a Nāttukōttai Chetti family usually all live together. The caste is noted in the Madura district for the huge houses, to which this custom has given rise. Married sons have a certain number of rooms set aside for them, and are granted a carefully calculated yearly budget allotment of rice and other necessaries. On the father's death, contrary to all ordinary Hindu usage, the eldest son retains the house, and the youngest his mother's jewels and bed, while the rest of the property is equally divided among all the sons. When a male child is born, a certain sum is usually set aside, and in due time the accumulated interest upon it is spent on the boy's education. As soon as he has picked up business ways sufficiently, he begins life as the agent of some other members of the caste, being perhaps entrusted with a lakh of rupees, often on no better security than an unstamped acknowledgment scratched on a palmyra leaf, and sent off to Burma or Singapore to trade with it, and invest it. A percentage on the profits of this undertaking, and savings from his own salary, form a nucleus which he in turn invests on his own account. His wife will often help pay the house-keeping bills by making baskets and spinning thread, for the women are as thrifty as the men. As a caste they are open-handed and devout. In many houses, one pie in every rupee of profit is regularly set aside for charitable and religious expenditure, and a whip round for a caste-fellow in

difficulties is readily responded to. By religion they are fervent Saivites, and many of the men proclaim the fact by wearing a rudrāksham (*Elæocarpus Ganitrus*) fruit, usually set in gold, round their necks. Of late years they have spent very large sums upon several of the famous Saivite shrines in the Madras Presidency, notably those at Chidambaram,* Madura, and Tiruvannāmalai. Unfortunately, however, much of the work has been executed in the most lamentable modern taste, and it is saddening to contrast the pitiful outcome of their heavy outlay with the results which might have been attained under judicious guidance. The decoration in the new Kaliyāna Mahāl in the Madura temple is mainly inferior varnished wood-carving, looking-glasses, and coloured glass balls. The same style has been followed at Tiruvannāmalai, although lying scattered about in the outer courts of the temple are enough of the old pierced granite pillars to make perhaps the finest mantapam in South India. Owing to their wealth and their money-lending, the Nāttukōttai Chettis have been called the Jews of South India, but their kindliness and charity deserve more recognition than this description accords."

I am informed that the property of a woman (jewels, vessels, investments, etc.), on her decease, goes to her daughters. As among other Hindu castes, the eldest son may retain the personal effects of his father, and, with the consent of his brothers, may retain his house. But the value thereof is deducted from his share in the property.

It is stated in the Madura Manual that the "Nāttukōttai Settis in particular are notorious for their greed, and most amusing stories are told about them. However

* The proverb Chetti Chidambaram is well known.

wealthy they may be, they usually live in the most penurious manner, and they will never by any chance show mercy to a debtor, so long as he shall have a penny left, or the chance of earning one. However, to make amends for their rapacity, they are in the habit of spending large sums now and then in works of charity. And, whatever faults there may be, they are most excellent men of business. Indeed, until quite lately, the good faith and honesty of a Nāttukōttai Setti were proverbial, and are even now conspicuous. The Nāttukōttai Settis claim to be a good caste, and asserted that they emigrated to this district thousands of years ago from a town called Kāveripattanam, in consequence of an intolerable persecution. But the other Settis will not admit the truth of their story, and affect to despise them greatly, alleging even that they are the bastard descendants of a Muhammadan man and a Kalla woman. The word Nāttukōttai is said to be a corruption of Nāttarasangkōttai, the name of a small village near Sivaganga. But this derivation appears to be doubtful." The name is usually said to be derived from Nāttukōttai, or country fort.

It has been said that "the Nāttukōttai Chettis, in organisation, co-operation, and business methods, are as remarkable as the European merchants. Very few of them have yet received any English education. They regard education as at present given in public schools as worse than useless for professional men, as it makes men theoretical, and scarcely helps in practice. The simple but strict training which they give their boys, the long and tedious apprenticeship which even the sons of the richest among them have to undergo, make them very efficient in their profession, and methodical in whatever they undertake to do."

Concerning the Nāttukōttai Chettis, Mr. P. R. Sundara Aiyar writes as follows.* "The first and chiefest aim of a Nāttukōttai Chetti is to make as much money as possible. He does not regard usury as a sin. As a little boy of ten or twelve, he begins to apply himself to business, learns accounts, and attends the shop of his father. As soon as he marries, his father gives him a separate home, or rather compels him to live separately, though often in the same house as his parents. This makes him self-reliant, and produces in him a desire to save as much money as possible. He is given a certain allowance out of the paternal estate, but, if he spends more, he is debited with the excess amount. Every one consequently tries to increase his stock of individual savings. Even the women earn money in a variety of ways. Every rupee saved is laid out at as high a rate of interest as possible. It is commonly stated that a rupee, laid out at the birth of a child at compound interest at 12 per cent., will amount to a lakh of rupees by the time he attains the age of a hundred. The habits of a Nāttukōttai Chetti are very simple, and his living is very cheap, even when he is rich. So strict are the Chettis in pecuniary matters that, if a relation visits them, he gets only his first meal free, and if he stays longer, is quietly debited with the cost of his stay."

The Nāttukōttai Chettis † are said to employ Kammālans, Valaiyans, Kallans, and Vallambans as their cooks. They are permitted to enter the interior of Hindu temples, and approach near to the innermost doorway of the central shrine. This privilege is doubtless accorded to them owing to the large sums of money

* Malabar Quart: Review, 1905.

† C. Hayavadana Rao, Indian Review, VIII, 8, 1907.

which they spend on temples, and in endowing charitable institutions. It is noted, in the Gazetteer of the Madura district, that "of the profits of their commercial transactions, a fixed percentage (called magamai) is usually set aside for charity. Some of the money so collected is spent on keeping up Sanskrit schools, but most of it has been laid out in the repair and restoration of the temples of the south, especial attention being paid to those shrines (pādal petta sthalangal, as they are called), which were hymned by the four great poet-saints, Mānikya Vāchakar, Appar, Tirugnāna Sambandhar, and Sundaramūrti." "The Chettis," Mr. Sundara Aiyar writes, "are believed to be the most charitable class in Southern India, and undoubtedly they spend the largest amount of money on charity. They set apart a fraction of their profits for charity. They levy rates among themselves for local charities, wherever they go. The income obtained from the rates is generally spent on temples. In new places like Ceylon, Burma, and Singapore, they build new temples, generally dedicated to Subramanya Swāmi. In India itself, they establish festivals in existing temples, and undertake the repair of temples. Immense sums have been spent by them recently in the renovation and restoration of ancient temples. We should not be surprised to be told that the amount spent within the last thirty years alone amounts to a crore of rupees. Being Saivites, they do not generally care for Vaishnava temples. And, even among Saiva temples, only such as have special sanctity, and have been sung about by the Saiva Nainars or Bhaktas, are patronised by them. They have devoted large sums to the establishment of comfortable choultries (rest-houses), feeding houses, Vēdic and recently also Sastraic pāthasālas (schools). They have established schools for the education of

the Kurukal or the priestly class. And, in fact, every charity of the orthodox Hindu type finds generous support among them."

It is recorded, in the Gazetteer of the Madura district, that the gōpurams of the Madura temple "have been repaired of late years at great cost by the Nāttukōttai Chettis. The northern tower used to consist only of the brick and stone-work storeys, and was known in consequence as the mottai (literally bald) gōpuram. Recently, however, a courageous Chetti, who cared nothing for the superstition that it is most unlucky to complete a building left unfinished, placed the usual plaster top upon it."

In recent years, the temple at Chidambaram has been renovated by the Nāttukōttai Chettis, who "have formed for this and similar restorations a fund which is made up of a fee of four annas per cent. levied from their clients on all sums borrowed by the latter. The capital of this is invested, and the interest thereon devoted exclusively to such undertakings."*

In 1906, the purificatory ceremony, or kumbabishēkam, of the Sri Pasupathiswara Swāmi temple at Karūr was performed with great pomp. The old temple had been thoroughly overhauled and repaired by the Nāttukōttai Chettis. The ceremony cost about fifty thousand rupees. Many thousands were fed, and presents of money made to a large number of Vaidiki Brāhmans. In the same year, at a public meeting held in Madras to concert measures for establishing a pinjrapole (hospital for animals), one of the resolutions was that early steps should be taken to collect public subscriptions from the Hindu community generally, and in

* Gazetteer of the South Arcot district.

particular from the Nāttukōttai Chettis, Gujarātis, and other mercantile classes.

Still more recently, the kumbabishēkam festival was celebrated at Tiruvanaikkaval, the seat of a celebrated temple near Trichinopoly, which was repaired by the Nāttukōttai Chettis at a cost of many lakhs of rupees.

By a traditional custom, the Nāttukōttai Chettis live largely by money-lending. They never serve under any one outside their own community. They either trade on their own account, or are employed as agents or assistants. The pay of an assistant is always calculated for a period of three years, and a portion thereof is paid in advance after a month's service. This the assistant invests to the best advantage. At the end of a year, a portion of the balance of the pay is handed over to him, leaving a small sum to be paid at the end of the contract period. His expenses for board and lodging are met by his employer, and he may receive a small share of the profits of the business. A man, on receiving an agency, starts on an auspicious day, and proceeds to a temple of Ganēsa, and to a matam (religious institution) containing figures of Ganēsa and Natēsa. After prostrating himself before the gods, he proceeds on his way. If he encounters an object of evil omen, he will not continue, and, if he has to journey to a distant spot, he will throw up his appointment. The accounts of the Nāttukōttai Chettis are audited triennially, an annual audit being inconvenient, as their business is carried on at various remote spots. The foreign business is said* to "be transacted by agents belonging to the caste, who receive a salary proportioned to the distance of the place, and also, usually, a percentage on the profits. They generally serve for three years, and

* Gazetteer of the Madura district.



NĀTTUKŌTTAI CHETTI CHILDREN.

then return, and give an account of their stewardship." The commencement of a fresh period of three years is made on an auspicious day called puthukanakkunāl (fresh account day), which is observed as a holiday. No business is transacted, and customers are invited, and receive presents of fruits, sweets, etc.

In connection with Nāttukōttai agencies, Mr. Hayavadana Rao writes as follows.* "People of moderate means usually elect to go to distant places as agents of the different firms that have their head offices either at Madura or in the Zamindaris of Ramnād and Sivaganga. The pay of a local agent varies directly with the distance of the place to which he is posted. If he is kept at Madura, he gets Rs. 100 per mensem ; if sent to Burma, he gets three times as much ; and, if to Natal, about twice the latter sum. If an agent proves himself to be an industrious and energetic man, he is usually given a percentage on the profits. The tenure of office is for three years, six months before the expiry of which the next agent is sent over to work conjointly with the existing one, and study the local conditions. On relief, the agent returns directly to his head office, and delivers over his papers, and then goes to his own village. With this, his connection with his firm practically ceases. He enjoys his well-earned rest of three years, at the end of which he seeks re-employment either under his old firm, or under any other. The former he is bound to, if he has taken a percentage on the profits during his previous tenure of office. If the old firm rejects him when he so offers himself, then he is at liberty to enter service under others." It is said to be very rare for Nāttukōttai women to accompany their husbands to distant places.

* Indian Review, VIII, 8, 1907.

"In fact, the husbands have to visit their native places at long intervals, and make a felicitous sojourn in the company of their wives."

The houses of the Nāttukōttai Chettis are spacious and substantial buildings all based on the same general plan. The front entrance opens into an oblong courtyard with a verandah all round, and rows of rooms at the two sides. At the farther end of the courtyard is an entrance leading into a backyard or set of apartments. Modern houses have imposing exteriors, and an upper storey. Married sons live in separate quarters, and every couple receive from their fathers a fixed yearly allowance, which may amount to twenty rupees and fifteen kalams of paddy. The sons may, if they choose, spend more, but the excess is debited to their account, and, at the time of partition of the estate, deducted, with interest, from their share.

It is noted by Mr. Hayavadana Rao that "the remarkable custom prevails amongst them that obliges all married members to cook separately and eat their meals, though they live in the same house. Even the widowed mother is no exception to this rule. Unmarried members live with their parents until they are married. Allotments of rice and other necessaries are annually made to the several semi-independent members of the household. This custom has given rise to the commodious houses in which members of this caste usually reside."

As concerning the origin of the Nāttukōttai Chettis, the following story is told. In ancient days, the Vaisyas of the lunar race were living in the town of Sānthyapuri in the Naganādu of the Jambudvipa (India). They paid daily visits to the shrine of Vināyaka god made of emerald, and were traders in precious stones. They were

much respected, and led the life of orthodox Saivites, wore rudrāksha beads, and smeared themselves with sacred ashes. They were, however, much oppressed by a certain ruler, and emigrated in a body to Conjeeveram in the Tondamandalam country in the year 204 of the Kāliyuga. The king of Conjeeveram gave them permission to settle in his territory, and made grants to them of land, temples and matams. They stayed there for a very long time, but, being troubled by heavy taxes and fines, left this part of the country about 2312 Kāliyuga, and settled in the Chōla country. The Chōla king, being much impressed with them, bestowed on them the privilege of placing the crown on the head of a new ruler at his coronation. At this time, the town of Kāveripumpattanam is said to have been in a very flourishing state, and the north street was occupied by Vaisyas from other countries. Being unwilling to disturb them, the king made the new settlers occupy the east, west, and south streets. As a mark of respect, they were allowed to use flags with the figure of a lion on them, and use golden vessels (kalasam) in their houses. They all, at the instigation of the king, became disciples of one Isānya Sivachariar of Patānjalikshetra (Chidambaram). About 3775 Kāliyuga, Pūvandi Chōla Rāja imprisoned several of the Vaisya women, whereon all the eight thousand Vaisya families destroyed themselves, leaving their male children to be taken care of by a religious teacher named Atmanadhachariar. In all 1,502 children were thus brought up, viz., 600 of six ways from the west street, 502 of seven ways from the east street, and 400 of four ways from the south street. Later on, Pūvandi Chōla fell ill, and, knowing his recovery to be impossible, sent for the Vaisya boys, and asked them to look after the coronation of his son

Rājabhushana Chōla. But they said that, as they were bachelors, they could not comply with his request. The king accordingly made them marry Vellāla girls. Those of the west street took as wives girls of the Karkaththar section, those of the east street girls of the Sōzhia section, and those of the south street girls of the Kāniyala section. The three groups became disciples of three different matams, viz., Tiruvārur, Kumbakonam, and Vānchium. In the year 3790, a dispute arose in connection with the right of priority in receiving sacred ashes between the Vaisya and true Vellāla women, and the former were made to become the disciples of a new guru (religious preceptor). About 3808, a Pāndya king, named Sundara Pāndya, is said to have asked the Chōla king to induce some of the Vaisyas to settle down in the Pāndya territory. They accordingly once more emigrated in a body, and reached the village of Onkarakudi on a Friday (the constellation Astham being in the ascendant on that day). They were allowed to settle in the tract of country north of the river Vaigai, east of the Piranmalai, and south of Vellar. Those from the east street settled at Ilayaththukudi, those from the west street at Ariyūr, and those from the south street at Sundarapattanam. Thus the Chettis became divided into three endogamous sections, of which the Ilayaththukudi and Sundarapattanam are found at the present day in the Madura district. The members of the Ariyūr section migrated to the west coast on the destruction of their village. The members of the Ilayaththukudi section became the Nāttukōttais. They, not being satisfied with only one place of worship, requested the king to give them more temples. Accordingly, temples were provided for different groups at Māththur, Vairavanpatti, Iraniyūr, Pillayarpatti, Nêmam, Iluppaikudi, Suraikudi, and

Velangkudi. At the present day, the Nāttukōttai Chettis are divided into the following divisions (kōvils or temples) and exogamous sub-divisions :—

1. Ilayaththūkudi kōvil—
   Okkurūdaiyar.
   Pattanasāmiar.
   Perumaruthurudaiyar.
   Kazhanivāsakkudaiyar.
   Kinkinikkudaiyar.
   Pērasendurudaiyar.
   Sirusēththurudaiyar.
2. Māththūr kōvil—
   Uraiyūr.
   Arumbakūr.
   Manalūr.
   Mannūr.
   Kannūr.
   Karuppūr.
   Kulaththūr.
3. Vairavan kōvil—
   Sirukulaththūr.
   Kazhanivāsal.
   Marudendrapūram.
4. Iraniyūr kōvil.
5. Pillayarpatti kōvil.
6. Nēmam kōvil.
7. Iluppaikudi kōvil.
8. Suraikudi kōvil.
9. Velāngkudi kōvil.

When Nāttukōttai Chettis adopt children, they must belong to the same temple division. An adopted son is called Manjanir Puthiran, or turmeric-water son, because, at the ceremony of adoption, the lad has to drink turmeric-water.* In villages where their main temples are situated, the temple manager is obliged to

* Indian Law Reports, Madras Series, XXIX, 1906.

give food to stranger Chettis, and charge for it if they belong to another temple division.

According to a variant of the story relating to the origin of the Nāttukōttai Chettis, "they were formerly merchants at the court of the Chōla kings who ruled at Kaveripattanam, at one time a flourishing sea-port at the mouth of the Cauveri, from which they emigrated in a body on being persecuted by one of them, and first settled at Nattarasankottai, about three miles north-east of Sivaganga."

By other castes, the Nāttukōttai Chettis are said to be the descendants of the offspring of unions between a Shānān and a Muhammadan and Uppu Korava women. Some of the peculiarities of the caste are pointed out in support of the story. Thus, Nāttukōttai men shave their heads like Muhammadans, and both men and women have the lobes of their ears dilated like the older Shānāns. Their girls wear necklaces of shell beads like Korava women, and the women delight in making baskets for recreation, as the Korava women do for sale. The caste is sometimes spoken of as Uppu (salt) Maruhira Chetti. The arguments and illustrations are naturally much resented by the Nāttukōttai Chettis, who explain the obnoxious name by the story that they were formerly very poor, and made a living by selling salt.

The Nāttukōttai Chettis have recourse to panchāyats (councils) in matters affecting the community. They have, Mr. Sundara Aiyar writes, "been at any rate till recently remarkable for settling their differences out of court. The influence of the elders in preventing litigation is very strong. They conciliate the disputants as far as possible and, after reducing the difference between them to a minimum, they often get their

signatures to an award, in which a blank is left to decide the still existing point of difference, the disputants agreeing, after putting in their signatures, to the mediators' filling in the blank, and deciding the dispute as they choose. We are afraid that this spirit of give-and-take is now unfortunately diminishing, and the arbitrament of the courts is more often resorted to than before." There are, among the Nāttukōttai Chettis, two forms of panchāyat, called madaththuvāsal mariyal (matam panchāyat) and kōvilvāsal mariyal (temple panchāyat), of which, at the present day, only the latter is in vogue. For every temple there is a manager, an assistant, and a servant called Vairāvi, who must be a Melakkāran. The aggrieved party lodges his complaint with the manager, who sends word to the leading men of the temple division concerned. The complainant and defendant are summoned to attend a council meeting, and the evidence is recorded by the temple manager. If the accused fails to put in an appearance, the Vairāvi is sent to his house, to take therefrom adavu (security) in the shape of some article belonging to him. In a recent case, a wealthy Nāttukōttai Chetti promised his brother's widow that she should be allowed to adopt a boy. But, as the promise was not fulfilled, she complained to the temple; and, as her brother-in-law did not attend the council meeting, the Vairāvi went to his house, and, in his absence, abstracted the adavu. This was regarded as a great insult, and there was some talk of the case going into court. Matters such as the arrangement of marriage contracts, monetary disputes, family discussions, and the like, are referred to the temple council for settlement. Final decisions are never recorded in writing, but delivered by word of mouth. Those who fail to abide by the decision of the council do not receive

a garland from the temple for their marriage, and without this garland a marriage cannot take place.

It is noted by Mr. Hayavadana Rao that each of the kōvils or temples "is managed by Karyakārans, who are nominated to the place by the local elders. These Karyakārans act as Panchāyatdars, and decide all civil cases referred to them. If a case is first referred to them, it may, if necessary, be carried over again to the established courts of the country. But, if once a case is first taken to the courts, they would not entertain it before themselves. They enforce their decrees (1) by refusing to give the garland of flowers at the marriage time, (2) by exercising the power of excommunication."

Every Nāttukōttai Chetti youth has to perform a ceremony called Sūppidi before marriage. On the Karthika day, when the constellation Krithikai is in the ascendant, he is taken on horseback to a Pillayar (Ganēsa) temple, where he worships, and whirls a bag of burning charcoal tied to a long string round his head. In front of the temple he burns a booth (chokkapane), which has been set up, and with the ashes his forehead is marked. On his return home, and at the entrance of Nāttukōttai houses which he passes, rice lamps are waved before him (alathi). In like manner, every girl has to go through a ceremony, called thiruvādhirai, before marriage. On the day of the Arudrādarsanam festival, she is bathed and decorated. A necklace of gold beads is placed on her neck instead of the necklace of glass beads (pāsimani), which she has hitherto worn. She proceeds, with a silver cup, to the houses where other girls are performing the ceremony, and bawls out :—

I have come dancing ; give me avarakkai (*Dolichos Lablab* beans).



JEWELRY OF NĀTTUKŌTTAI CHETTIS

I have come singing; give me padavarangkai (*Cyamopsis* beans).

I have come speaking; give me sorakkai (*Lagenaria* fruit).

Various kinds of vegetables are placed on the silver vessel, cooked, and distributed. Cakes, called dosai, are made in the house, and, during their preparation, holes are made in them by married women with an iron style. These cakes are also distributed, and it is taken as an insult if any individual does not receive one.

Every Nāttukōttai Chetti is said to have the inviolable right to claim the hand of his paternal aunt's daughter. This being so, ill-assorted marriages are quite common, the putative father being often but a child.* The marriage ceremonies commence with the giving of gold for the bride's neck. On an auspicious day, the bridegroom's party give a gold coin to a goldsmith, who beats it into a thin sheet, and goes home after receiving betel, etc. On the first day of the marriage rites, a feast is given to the bridegroom's family, and female ancestors are worshipped. On the following day, the presentation of the dowry (sireduththal) takes place. The presents, which are often of considerable value, are laid out for inspection, and an inventory of them is made. Perishable articles, such as rice, ghī (clarified butter), dhāl (*Cajanus indicus*), and fruits are sold. The bride's presents are taken to the house of the bridegroom, those who carry them being rewarded with betel, a silk fan, scent bottle, silk handkerchief, bottle of chocolate, a tin of biscuits, and a brass vessel. On the third day, garlands are received from the temples to which the bride

* C. Hayavadana Rao. *Loc. cit.*

and bridegroom belong. The bride's party go to the house of the bridegroom, taking on a tray a silk handkerchief and cloth, and in a silver vessel fifty rupees, betel, etc. These are presented to the bridegroom. This ceremony is called māppillai ariyappōthal, or going to examine the son-in-law. The next item on the programme is nālkuriththal, or fixing the day. The bridegroom's party proceed to the house of the bride, taking with them two cocoanuts wrapped up in a blanket, betel, turmeric, etc., as a present. The bride is bathed and decorated, and purangkaliththal is proceeded with. She stands by the side of her grandmother, and a Brāhman purōhit, taking up a few leafy margosa (*Melia Azadirachta*) twigs, touches the girl's shoulders, head, and knees with them, and throws them away. Her glass bead necklace is then removed. At the uppu-eduththal (salt carrying) ceremony, the bridegroom's party carry a basket containing salt, a bundle containing nine kinds of grains, and a palmyra scroll for writing the marriage contract on, to the bride's house. The sacred fire is lighted, and hōmam performed by the Brāhman purōhit. An old man, who has had a number of children, and belongs to a temple other than that of a bride, and the bridegroom's sister, then tie the tāli string round her neck. This string bears a large tāli, about seven inches long and four inches broad, and seventeen to twenty-three gold ornaments, often of considerable value. Some of them have very sharp points, so that accidents sometimes arise from the points sticking in the eyes of babies carried by women. For every day wear, the massive ornaments are replaced by a smaller set. Immediately after the tāli has been tied, the marriage contract (isagudi mānam) is written. Two copies are made, for the bride and bridegroom respectively.

As an example of a marriage contract, the following may be cited: "This is written for the marriage celebrated on . . . . between Subramanyan, the son of Okkurudaiyan Arunāchelam Chetti Ramanadhan Chetti and Valliammai, the daughter of Arumbākurudaiyan K. Narayana Chetti, both formerly of Ilayaththukudi, at the village of . . . . The value of jewels given to the girl is . . . . of gold; his dowry amounts to . . . .; money for female servant . . . .; sirattuchukram money . . . .; free gift of jewels . . . . This esaikudimanam was written by me at . . . . Signed Ramanadhan Chetti." The bridegroom goes on horseback to a Pillayar temple where he worships, and then proceeds in procession through various streets to the bride's house, accompanied by his sister carrying milk in a vessel, and a cooly bearing a bundle of seed rice. At every Chetti house the procession halts, and coloured rice lights are waved before the bridegroom. At the entrance to the bride's house, he is met by the bride, whose sister-in-law pushes the couple against each other. Hence the ceremony is called māppillaikuidiththukāttal, or showing the bride to the bridegroom by pushing her. The couple are then conducted to a dais within the house, and wristlets made of cotton cloth are tied on by the purōhit. They exchange cocoanuts and garlands, and, amid the blowing of the conch shell (musical instrument) by women, the bride's mother touches the couple with turmeric, ashes, sandal, etc. On the fourth day, money called veththilai surul rupai (betel-roll money) is given to the newly-married couple by Chettis and the maternal uncles. A silver vessel, containing betel and two rupees, is given to the bridegroom by his father-in-law. The bridegroom usually carries on his shoulders a long purse of silk

or red cloth, called valluvaippai, into which he puts the betel and other things which are given to him. On the last day of the marriage ceremonies, toe-rings and wristlets are removed, and the bridal pair eat together.

In connection with pregnancy, two ceremonies are performed, called respectively marunthidal (medicine giving) and thirthamkudiththal (drinking holy water). The former is celebrated at about the fifth month. On an auspicious day, the sister-in-law of the pregnant woman, amid the blowing of the conch-shell by females, extracts the juice from the leaves of five plants, and gives to the woman to drink. During the seventh month the woman is given consecrated water (thirtham) from the temple. All first-born children, both male and female, have to go through a ceremony called pudhumai (newness). When they are two years old, on an auspicious day, fixed by a Brāhman purōhit, the maternal uncle of the child ties on its neck strings of coral and glass beads, to which ornaments of pearls and precious stones are added in the case of the wealthy. The child is further decorated with other ornaments, and placed in an oval wooden tray, which is held by the mother and her sister-in-law. They go round three times with the tray, and the child's aunt, taking it up, carries it round to be blessed by those who have assembled. Presents of money are given to the child by relations and friends, and the maternal uncles have to give a larger sum than the others. On the second or third day the coral and bead ornaments are removed, and, on the fourth day, the child, if a male, is shaved, and must thenceforth have the head clean shaved throughout life. "The story goes that, when the Chōla king of Kāveripattanam persecuted them, the members of this caste resolved not to shave their heads until they quitted his territories. When

they reached their new settlement they shaved their heads completely as a memorial of their stern resolution."* When a death occurs among the Nāttukōttai Chettis, news thereof is conveyed by the Thandakāran, or caste messenger. Those who come to condole with the bereaved family are received with outstretched hands (kainīttikolludhal). The head of the corpse is shaved, and it is washed and decorated. In front of the house a pandal (booth), supported by four *Thespesia populnea* posts, and roofed with twigs of *Eugenia Jambolana*, is erected. Beneath this the corpse is laid, and all present go round it thrice. While the corpse is being got ready for conveyance to the burning ground, the daughters and sisters of the deceased husk paddy (unhusked rice). On the way to the burning ground, the son carries the fire. If the deceased is a young boy or girl, the pandal is removed after the funeral; otherwise it is removed, on a Tuesday, Thursday, or Sunday, within four days. The Nāttukōttais restrict the name pandal to the funeral booth, the marriage booth being called kāvanam or kottagai. Even an ordinary shed set up in front of a house is not called a pandal, as the name is associated with funerals. On the day following the funeral, the bigger fragments of bones are collected by a barber, and given to the son, who places them in an earthen pot. A Pandāram offers fruit, food, etc., to the deceased. Eight days afterwards, a feast, at which meat is partaken of for the first time since the death, is given to the relations of the dead person, and their pollution is at an end. They may not, however, enter a temple for thirty days. On the sixteenth day after death, the final death ceremonies (karmāndhiram) are performed, and liberal presents of

* C. Hayavadana Rao. *Loc. cit.*

money, religious books, such as the Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, and Periya Purānam, wooden spoons for domestic use, etc., are given to Brāhmans.

There are three matams, whereat the Nāttukōttai Chettis are initiated into their religion, at Pātharakkudi (or Padanakkudi) and Kīla for males, and Tulāvur for females. They are Saivites, but also, more especially the women, worship such minor deities as Aiyanar, Munēswara, and Karuppan. They are also said to worship two village goddesses, called Sellattamman and Kannudayamman, at Nattarasankottai.

Nāttukōttai men have the lobes of the ears artificially dilated, but seldom wear ornaments therein. They frequently have a gold chain round the loins, and wear finger rings set with diamonds. The wives even of wealthy men wear a cheap body cloth, and do menial house work, such as cleaning the kitchen utensils. They plait baskets, and, in some houses, wheels for spinning cotton may be seen.

Like other trading classes in Southern India, the Nāttukōttai Chettis have a trade language of their own, which varies according to locality. In the city of Madras they have three tables, for annas, rupees, and tens of rupees respectively. Each of these is formed out of the syllables of certain words. Thus, the anna table is composed of the syllables of Tiripurasundari, the goddess at Madura, which is a great centre for Nāttukōttai Chettis. The syllables (in the inverse order), and their money equivalent are as follows :—

Ri	½ anna.
Da	¾ ,,
Un	1 ,,
Su	2 annas.
Ra	3 ,,

Pu	4 annas.
Ri	8 "
Ti	12 "

The rupee table is composed of the word Vēdagirīsvararthunai, meaning with the help of Vēdagirīsvarar, the god at Tirukalikundram near Madras :—

Vē	1 rupee.
Da	2 rupees.
Gi	3 "
Ri	4 "
Ī	5 "
Is	6 "
Va	7 "
Ra	8 "
Ar	9 "
Thu	10 "
Nai	11 "

The tens-of-rupees table is made up from the word Tirukalikundram :—

Ti	10 rupees.
Ru	20 "
Ik	30 "
Ka	40 "
Li	50 "
Ik	60 "
Ku	70 "
In	80 "
Ra	90 "
Im	100 "

An anna is sometimes called vanakkam ; a rupee is known as vellē (white).

Nāttupattan.—A section of Ambalavāsis. (*See* Unni.)

Nāttusāmbān.—Sāmbān (a name of Siva) is a title of some Tamil Paraiyans. Nāttusāmbān denotes a village Paraiyan.

Nattuvan.—Defined in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as "an occupational term, meaning a dancing-master, which is applied to males of the dancing-girl castes, who teach dancing." At nautch parties, when the Dēva-dāsis dance, the Nattuvans play the accompaniment on the drum, bag-pipe, flute, clarionet, cymbals, etc. At the initiation of a Kaikōlan girl as a Dēva-dasi, her dancing-master seats himself behind her, and, grasping her legs, moves them up and down in time with the music. Some Ōcchans in the Tamily country, who teach dancing to Dēva-dasis, are also called Nattuvan.

Natuvili (middle).—A sub-division of Paraiyans in Travancore.

Navakōti (nine crores).—An exogamous sept of Dēsūr Reddi. A crore is one hundred lakhs, *i.e.*, 10,000,000.

Navalipitta (peacock).—A sept of Jātapu.

Navāyat.—The Navāyats or Navāyets are summed up, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as "a Musalman tribe, which appears to have originally settled at Bhatkal in North Canara, and is known on the west coast as Bhatkali. The derivation of the name is much disputed. There are five sub-divisions of the tribe, namely, Kurēshi, Mehkeri, Chīda, Gheas, and Mohāgir. It takes a high place among Musalmans, and does not intermarry with other tribes."

Of the Nevayets, the following account, based on the Saadut Nama, and conversations with members of the community, is given by Colonel Wilks.* "Nevayet is generally supposed to be a corruption of the Hindustanee and Mahratta terms for new-comer. About the end of the first century of the Hejira, or the early part of the

* Historical Sketches of the South of India, 1810.

eighth century of the Christian era, Hejaj Bin Yusuf, Governor of Irak, on the part of the Khalif Abd-al-Melik-bin-Merwan, a monster abhorred for his cruelties even among Musalmans, drove some respectable and opulent persons of the house of Hâshem to the desperate resolution of abandoning for ever their native country. Aided by the good offices of the inhabitants of Kufa, a town of celebrity in those days, situated near to the tomb of Ali, west of the Euphrates, they departed with their families, dependents, and effects, and embarked on ships prepared for their reception in the Persian Gulf. Some of these landed on that part of the western coast of India called the Concan; the others to the eastward of Cape Comorin; the descendants of the former are the Nevayets; of the latter the Lubbē. The Lubbē pretend to one common origin with the Nevayets, and attribute their black complexion to intermarriage with the natives; but the Nevayets affirm that the Lubbē are the descendants of their domestic slaves; and there is certainly, in the physiognomy of this very numerous class, and in their stature and form, a strong resemblance to the natives of Abyssinia. The Nevayets of the western coast preserved the purity of their original blood by systematically avoiding intermarriage with the Indians, and even with the highest Muhammadan families, for many centuries after the establishment of the Musalman dynasties of the Deckan. Even at this time there are some Nevayets whose complexions approach the European freshness. Their adherence to each other as members of the same family preserved their respectability; and they were famed at the Muhammadan courts of the Deckan for uniting the rare qualities of the soldier, the scholar, and the gentleman."

Nāvutiyan.—A synonym of Velakkattalavan.

Nāyādi.—In the Malabar Manual, the Nāyādis are briefly summed up as follows. "Of the Nāyādis, or lowest caste among the Hindus—the dog-eaters—nothing definite is known. They are most persistent in their clamour for charity, and will follow at a respectful distance, for miles together, any person walking, driving, or boating. If anything is given to them, it must be laid down, and, after the person offering it has proceeded a sufficient distance, the recipient comes timidly forward, and removes it."

The subjects, whom I examined and measured at Shoranūr, though living only about three miles off, had, by reason of the pollution which they traditionally carry with them, to avoid walking over the long bridge which spans the river, and follow a circuitous route of many miles. Eventually they had to climb, or be ignominiously hoisted over the wall of the bungalow. Ignorant of the orthodox manner of using a chair, the first victim of the craniometer, who had to sit while his head was under examination, assumed the undignified position with which Eton boys who have been swished are familiar. Measurements concluded, men, women, and children sat down on the grass to an ample feast. And, before they departed homeward, copious blessings were invoked on me, to a chorus composed of the repetition of a single shrill note, not unlike that of the first note of a jackal cry. To quote the newspaper account of my doings, which refers to the 'monograms' issued by me on matters ethnological: "In the evening the kind gentleman gave them a sumptuous treat of canji and curry, and gave them also copper coins, toddy, and arrack. The poor people left the place immensely pleased, and were safely escorted to the British side of the river from the Cochin territory."



NĀYĀDIS.

When travelling on the public roads in Malabar or Cochin, one may observe a few ragged and dirty cloths spread near the road, with one or two copper coins on them; and, at the same time, hear a chorus of monotonous stentorian voices at a distance of a hundred yards or more, emanating from a few miserable specimens of humanity, standing ghost-like with dishevelled hair, and a long strip of leaves tied round the waist, or clad in a dirty loin-cloth. The coins represent the alms given by the charitably disposed traveller, and the persons are Nāyādis. I am told that, near Kollatūr, there is a stone called the Nāyādi pārai, which is believed to be a man who was turned into stone for not giving alms to a Nāyādi.

The name Nāyādi is equivalent to Nāyattukar, *i.e.*, hunter. The Nāyādis are, in fact, professional hunters, and are excellent shots. The Nāyars, and other higher classes, used formerly to take them with them on hunting and shooting expeditions. But, since the Arms Act came into force, the Nāyādis find this occupation gone. They are also good archers, and used to kill deer, pigs, hares, etc., and eat them. These animals are now difficult to get, as the forests are reserved by Government, and private forests are denuded of their trees for use as fuel, and for house-building by a growing population, and for consumption on the railway. The suggestion has been made that the name Nāyādi is derived from the fact of their eating otters, which live in hill streams, and are called nir-nai (water-dog).

The approach of a Nāyādi within a distance of three hundred feet is said to contaminate a Brāhman, who has to bathe and put on a new sacred thread, to cleanse himself of the pollution. The Nāyādis, in fact, hold the

lowest position in the social scale, and consequently labour under the greatest disadvantage.

The Nāyādis live mostly in isolated huts on the tops of hills, and generally select a shōla, or glade, where there is a pond or stream. Some families live on the land of their landlords, whose crops they watch by night, to guard them against the attacks of wild beasts. Sometimes they are engaged in ploughing, sowing, weeding, transplanting, and reaping, the rice crop, or in plantain (banana) gardens. I take exception to the comparison by a recent author of the British Empire to the banana (*Musa*) throwing out aërial roots. The banyan (*Ficus bengalensis*) must have been meant.

The male members of the community are called Nāyādis, and the females Nāyādichis. The boys are called Molayans, and the young girls Manichis. Succession is in the male line (makkathāyam).

A thatched shed with palm-leaf walls, a few earthen pots, and a chopper, constitute the Nāyādi's property. He occasionally collects honey and bees-wax, and also the gum (matti pasai) from the mattipāl tree (*Ailanthus malabarica*), which, when burnt, is used as temple incense and for fumigating the bed-chamber. He receives toddy in exchange for the honey and wax, and copper coins for the gum, with which he purchases luxuries in the shape of salt, chillies, dried fish, tobacco, and liquor. He makes rough ropes from the malanar plant, and the bark of the kayyūl tree (*Bauhinia*). The bark is soaked in water, sun-dried, and the fibre manufactured into rope. He also makes slings of fibre, wherewith he knocks over birds, and mats from a species of *Cyperus*.

According to custom, the Nāyādi has to offer four ropes, each eight yards long, to every Nambūtiri illam,

and two ropes to every Nāyar house near his settlement, on the occasion of the Vishu and Ōnam festivals. In return he receives a fixed measure of paddy (rice). The ropes are used for tethering cattle, and for drawing water from the well. By a wise dispensation of the ancient local chieftains, to each Nāyādi is assigned a desom (portion of a parish), within which he enjoys certain privileges. And no Nāyādi has any business to poach on his preserves. The privileges are these. On birthdays, anniversaries, and festive occasions, the Nāyādi receives his share of curry and rice, tied up in an old cloth. When a person is sick, a black country-made kambli (blanket), with gingelly (*Sesamum*), mustard, turmeric, and cocoanut tied up in the four corners, is passed three times over the patient and presented to a Nāyādi, together with a palm umbrella, a stick, and a cucumber. This is called kala-dhānam, or offering to Yama, the god of death, whose attack has to be warded off by propitiatory offerings. The Nāyādi accepts the gifts, and prays for the long life and prosperity of the giver. Placing them before his own family god, he prays that the life of the sick person may be spared, and that the disease may not be transferred to him.

Like the Cherumans, the Nāyādis drink, but they cannot afford to buy as much toddy as the former, for the Cheruman works regularly for a daily wage. Monkeys, which are very troublesome in gardens, are shot down by the higher classes, and given to the Nāyādis to eat. Their dietary includes rats, mungooses, pigs, deer, paraquets, the koel (cuckoo), doves, quails, fowls, paddy-birds, hares, tortoises, Varanus (lizard), crocodiles, and fish. They abstain from eating the flesh of dogs, cats, snakes, land-crabs, shell-fish, and beef. Among vegetables, the tubers of yams (*Dioscorea*) and *Colocasia* are included.

They produce fire by friction with two sticks of *Litsæa sebifera*, in the shorter of which a cavity is scooped out. They do not, like the Todas, put powdered charcoal in the cavity, but ignite the cloth rag by means of the red-hot wood dust produced by the friction.

When a woman is pregnant, she craves for the flesh of a monkey or jungle squirrel during the sixth month. During the seventh month, a ceremony is performed, to relieve her of the influence of devils, who may be troubling her. It is called ozhinnukalayuka. Abortion is attributed to the malign influence of evil spirits. To ward off this, they tie round the neck a magic thread, and invoke the aid of their hill gods and the spirits of their ancestors. They erect a special hut for delivery, to which the woman retires. When she is in labour, her husband shampooes his own abdomen, while praying to the gods for her safe delivery—a custom which seems to suggest the couvade. As soon as his wife is delivered, he offers thanks to the gods "for having got the baby out." The woman observes pollution for ten days, during which her husband avoids seeing her. Any deformity in the child is attributed to the evil influence of the gods. On the twenty-eighth day after birth, the ceremony of naming the child takes place. The name given to the first-born son is that of the paternal grandfather, and to the first-born daughter that of the maternal grandmother. In the fifth year, the ear-boring ceremony takes place, and the operation is performed by the child's uncle. A piece of brass wire takes the place of ear-rings. Girls wear a plug of wood in the lobes. The Nāyādichis do not, like the Cheruman women, wear bracelets, but have many rows of beads round their necks, and hanging over their bosoms.

When a girl reaches puberty, a Nāyādichi leads her to a tank (pond), in which she bathes, after a

pāndi, composed of several pieces of plantain leaf tied together, has been carried three or four times round her. She must not touch any utensils, and must abstain from touching her head with the hand, and, if the skin itches, the body must be scratched with a small stick.

Concerning a very interesting form of marriage, Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar writes as follows.* "A large hut is constructed of 'holly' and other leaves, inside which the girl is ensconced. Then all the young men and women of the village gather round the hut, and form a ring about it. The girl's father, or the nearest male relative, sits a short distance from the crowd, with a tom-tom in his hands. Then commences the music, and a chant is sung by the father, which has been freely translated as follows:—

> Take the stick, my sweetest daughter,
> Now seize the stick, my dearest love,
> Should you not capture the husband you wish for,
> Remember, 'tis fate decides whom you shall have.

"All the young men, who are eligible for marriage, arm themselves with a stick each, and begin to dance round the hut, inside which the bride is seated. This goes on for close on an hour, when each of them thrusts his stick inside the hut through the leafy covering. The girl has then to take hold of one of these sticks from the inside, and the owner of the stick which she seizes becomes the husband of the concealed bride. This ceremony is followed up by feasting, after which the marriage is consummated."

A photograph by Mr. F. Fawcett shows a young man with a ring hanging round his neck, as a sign that he was

* Malabar and its Folk.

still unattached. But he was soon about to part with it, for a present of a rupee enabled him to find a girl, and fix up a marriage, within two days.

Adultery is regarded with abhorrence, and there is a belief that those who are guilty of it are liable to be attacked by wild beasts or demons. On the occasion of the marriage of a divorced woman's son or daughter, the mother attends the festivities, if she receives a cordial invitation from her children. But she does not look her former husband straight in the face, and returns to her home the same evening.

When a man lies at the point of death, it is usual to distribute rice kanji to the people, who, after taking their fill, become possessed with the power of predicting the fate in store for the sick man. According as the taste of the kanji turns to that of a corpse, or remains unaltered, the death or recovery of the patient is foretold in their deep and loud voices.* The Nāyādis either burn or bury their dead. Several layers of stones are placed within the grave, and its site is marked by three big stones, one in the middle, and one at each end. The burnt ashes of the bones are collected, and preserved in a pot, which is kept close to the hut of the deceased. Pollution is observed for ten days, during which the enangan (relations by marriage) cook for the mourners. On the tenth day, the sons of the deceased go, together with their relations, to the nearest stream, and bury the bones on the bank. The sons bathe, and perform beli, so that the soul of the departed may enter heaven, and ghosts may not trouble them. After the bath, a sand-heap, representing the deceased, is constructed, and on it are placed a piece of plantain leaf, some unboiled rice, and karuka grass

* Malabar and its Folk.



NĀYĀDIS MAKING FIRE.

(*Cynodon Dactylon*). Over these water is poured twelve times, and the sons reverently prostrate themselves before the heap. They then return home, and cow-dung, mixed with water, is sprinkled over them by their relations, and poured over the floor of the hut. In this manner they are purified. Some time during the seventh month after death, according to another account, the grave, in which the corpse has been buried, is dug up, and the bones are carefully collected, and spread out on a layer of sticks arranged on four stones placed at the corners of a pit. The bones are then covered with more sticks, and the pile is lighted. The partially burnt bones are subsequently collected by the eldest son of the deceased, and carried to the hut in a new pot, which is tied to a branch of a neighbouring tree. This rite concluded, he bathes, and, on his return, the adiyanthiram (death ceremony) day is fixed. On this day, the eldest son removes the pot, and buries it by the side of a stream, near which a heap of sand is piled up. On this all the agnates pour water three times, prostrate themselves before it, and disperse. The ceremony is brought to a close with a square meal. Some time ago an old Nāyādi, who had the reputation of being a good shot, died. His son obtained a handful of gunpowder from a gun-license holder, and set fire to it near the grave, with a view to satisfying the soul of the deceased.

The chief gods of the Nāyādis are Mallan, Malavazhi, and Parakutti, to whom offerings of toddy, rice, and the flesh of monkeys are made. Parakutti it is who aids them in their hunting expeditions, bringing the game to them, and protecting them from wild beasts. If they do not succeed in bagging the expected game, they abuse him.

The Nāyādis are also ancestor worshippers, and keep representations of the departed, to which offerings

of rice and toddy are made during the Ōnam, Vishu, and other festivals. Beneath a mango tree in a paramba (garden) were forty-four stones set up in a circle round the tree. One of the stones was a beli-kal (beli stone), such as is placed round the inner shrines of temples. The remainder resembled survey stones, but were smaller in size. The stones represented forty-four Nāyādis, who had left the world. On the ceremonial occasions referred to above, a sheep or fowl is killed, and the blood allowed to fall on them, pūja (worship) is performed, and solemn prayers are offered that the souls of the departed may protect them against wild beasts and snakes. A Nāyādi asserted that, if he came across a tiger, he would invoke the aid of his ancestors, and the animal would be rendered harmless.

Whenever the Nāyādis labour under any calamity or disease, they consult the Parayan astrologer. And, when a woman is possessed by devils, the Parayan is summoned. He is furnished with a thread and some toddy. Muttering certain prayers to Parakutti and other deities, he ties the thread round the woman's neck, drinks the toddy, and the devil leaves her. When a person is believed to be under the influence of a devil or the evil eye, salt, chillies, tamarind, oil, mustard, cocoanut, and a few pice (copper coins) in a vessel are waved thrice round the head of the affected individual, and given to a Nāyādi, whose curse is asked for. There is this peculiarity about a Nāyādi's curse, that it always has the opposite effect. So, when he is asked to curse one who has given him alms, he does so by invoking misery and evil upon him. By the Nāyādi money is called chembu kāsu (copper coin), food elamāttam (exchange of leaves), and having no food nakkān illa (nothing to lick on). As a protection against

snake-bite, the Nāyādis wear a brass toe-ring. And, when engaged in catching rats in their holes, they wear round the wrist a snake-shaped metal ring, to render them safe against snakes which may be concealed in the hole.

The Nāyādis who live within the jurisdiction of the Kavalapāra Nāyar near Shoranūr wear the kudumi (front lock of hair), as there are no Māppillas (Muhammadans) to molest them. The Kavalapāra Nāyar was at one time an important chief, and directed all Nambūtiri jenmis (landlords) who held land within his jurisdiction to bind themselves not to let the land to Māppillas. Nāyādis of other parts are not allowed by the Māppillas to wear the kudumi, and, if they do so, they are taken for Parayans and professional sorcerers, and beaten.

Some Nāyādis have become converts to Christianity, others to Muhammadanism, and maintain themselves by begging for alms from Muhammadans. They are called Thoppyitta (cap-wearing) Nāyādis.

The priest of the Nāyādis is called Mūppan. His appointment is hereditary, and he enquires into all matters affecting the community, and can excommunicate a guilty person.*

Average height, 155 cm.; nasal index, 86.

Nāyar.—" The Nāyars," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,† " are a Dravidian caste, or rather a community, for we find several distinct elements with totally different occupations among the people who call themselves by this title. The original Nāyars were undoubtedly a military body, holding lands and serving as a militia, but the present Nâyar caste includes persons who, by hereditary

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* This note is based mainly on articles by Mr. S. Appadorai Aiyar and Mr. L. K. Anantha Krishna Aiyar.

† Madras Census Report, 1891.

occupation, are traders, artisans, oilmongers, palanquin-bearers, and even barbers and washermen. The fact seems to be that successive waves of immigration brought from the Canarese and Tamil countries different castes and different tribes; and these, settling down in the country, adopted the customs and manners, and assumed the caste names of the more respectable of the community that surrounded them. This process of assimilation is going on even yet. Chettis of Coimbatore, for example, who settled in Palghāt and Valluvanād within living memory, have developed by this time into Nāyars. In the census schedules we find instances in which the males of a house affix the term Nāyar to their names, while the names of the females end in Chettichi. Gollas entering the country from the north have similarly, in course of time, assumed Nāyar customs and manners, and are now styled Nāyars. Again the rājahs and chieftains of the country sometimes raised individuals or classes who had rendered them meritorious service to the rank of Nāyars. These men were thereafter styled Nāyars, but formed a separate sub-division with little or no communion with the rest of the Nāyar class, until at least, after the lapse of generations, when their origin was forgotten. Nāyar may thus at present be considered to be a term almost as wide and general as Sūdra."

According to the Brāhman tradition, the Nāyar caste is the result of union between the Nambūdris with Dēva, Gandharva and Rakshasa women introduced by Parasurāma; and this tradition embodies the undoubted fact that the caste by its practice of hypergamy has had a very large infusion of Aryan blood. In origin the Nāyars were probably a race of Dravidian immigrants, who were amongst the first invaders of Malabar, and as conquerors assumed the position of the governing and

land-owning class. The large admixture of Aryan blood combined with the physical peculiarities of the country would go far to explain the very marked difference between the Nāyar of the present day and what may be considered the corresponding Dravidian races in the rest of the Presidency.*

In connection with the former position of the Nāyars as protectors of the State, it is noted by Mr. Logan † that "in Johnston's 'Relations of the most famous Kingdom in the world' (1611), there occurs the following quaintly written account of this protector guild. 'It is strange to see how ready the Souldiour of this country is at his Weapons: they are all gentile men, and tearmed Naires. At seven Years of Age they are put to School to learn the Use of their Weapons, where, to make them nimble and active, their Sinnewes and Joints are stretched by skilful Fellows, and annointed with the Oyle Sesamus [gingelly: *Sesamum indicum*]: By this annointing they become so light and nimble that they will winde and turn their Bodies as if they had no Bones, casting them forward, backward, high and low, even to the Astonishment of the Beholders. Their continual Delight is in their Weapon, perswading themselves that no Nation goeth beyond them in Skill and Dexterity.' And Jonathan Duncan, who visited Malabar more than once as one of the Commissioners from Bengal in 1792–93, and afterwards as Governor of Bombay, after quoting the following lines from Mickle's Camoens, Book VII—

'Poliar the labouring lower clans are named:
By the proud Nayrs the noble rank is claimed;
The toils of culture and of art they scorn:
The shining faulchion brandish'd in the right—
Their left arm wields the target in the fight'—

* Gazetteer of the Malabar district. † Manual of the Malabar district.

went on to observe: 'These lines, and especially the two last, contain a good description of a Nayr, who walks along, holding up his naked sword with the same kind of unconcern as travellers in other countries carry in their hands a cane or walking staff. I have observed others of them have it fastened to their back, the hilt being stuck in their waist band, and the blade rising up and glittering between their shoulders' (Asiatic Researches, V. 10, 18). M. Mahé de la Bourdonnais, who had some experience of their fighting qualities in the field, thus described them: 'Les Nairs sont de grands hommes basanés, légers, et vigoureux: Ils n'ont pas d'autre profession que celle des armes, et seraient de fort bons soldats, s'ils étiaent disciplinés: mais ils combattent sans ordre, ils prennent la fuite dès qu'on les serre de près avec quelque supèriorité; pourtant, s'ils se voient pressés avec vigueur et qu'ils se croient en danger, ils reviennent à la charge, et ne se rendent jamais' (M. Esquer, Essai sur les Castes dans l'Inde, page 181). Finally, the only British General of any note—Sir Hector Munro—who had ever to face the Nāyars in the field, thus wrote of their modes of fighting:—

'One may as well look for a needle in a Bottle of Hay as any of them in the daytime, they being lurking behind sand banks and bushes, except when we are marching towards the Fort, and then they appear like bees out in the month of June.' 'Besides which,' he continued, 'they point their guns well, and fire them well also' (Tellicherry Factory Diary, March, 1761). They were, in short, brave light troops, excellent in skirmishing, but their organization into small bodies with discordant interests unfitted them to repel any serious invasion by an enemy even moderately well organised. Among other strange Malayāli customs, Sheikh

Zin-ud-din * noticed the fact that, if a chieftain was slain, his followers attacked and obstinately persevered in ravaging the slayer's country, and killing his people till their vengeance was satisfied. This custom is doubtless that which was described so long ago as in the ninth century A.D. by two Muhammadans, whose work was translated by Renaudot (Lond., 1733). 'There are kings who, upon their accession, observe the following ceremony. A quantity of cooked rice was spread before the king, and some three or four hundred persons came of their own accord, and received each a small quantity of rice from the king's own hands after he himself had eaten some. By eating of this rice they all engage themselves to burn themselves on the day the king dies or is slain, and they punctually fulfil their promise.' Men, who devoted themselves to certain death on great occasions, were termed Amoucos by the Portuguese; and Barbosa, one of the Portuguese writers, alluded to the practice as prevalent among the Nāyars. Purchas has also the following:—'The king of Cochin hath a great number of Gentlemen, which he calleth Amocchi, and some are called Nairi: these two sorts of men esteem not their lives anything, so that it may be for the honour of the king.' The proper Malayālam term for such men was Chāver, literally those who took up, or devoted themselves to death. It was a custom of the Nāyars, which was readily adopted by the Māppillas, who also at times—as at the great Mahāmakkam, twelfth year feast, at Tirunāvāyi †—devoted themselves to death in the

* The author of Tahafat-ul-Mujahidin or hints for persons seeking the way to God, as it is frequently translated, or more literally an offering to warriors who shall fight in defence of religion against infidels. Translated by Rowlandson. London, 1833.

† See Manual of the Malabar district, 164, sq., and Fawcett, Madras Museum Bull., III, 3, 1901.

company of Nāyars for the honour of the Valluvanad Rāja. And probably the frantic fanatical rush of the Māppillas on British bayonets, which is not even yet a thing of the past, is the latest development of this ancient custom of the Nāyars. The martial spirit of the Nāyars in these piping times of peace has quite died out for want of exercise. The Nāyar is more and more becoming a family man. Comparatively few of them now-a-days even engage in hunting." According to an inscription of the King Kulōttunga I (A.D. 1083-84), he conquered Kudamalai-Nadu, *i.e.*, the western hill country (Malabar), whose warriors, the ancestors of the Nāyars of the present day, perished to the last man in defending their independence.*

The following description of the Nāyars at the beginning of the sixteenth century is given by Duarte Barbosa.† "The Nairs are the gentry, and have no other duty than to carry on war, and they continually carry their arms with them, which are swords, bows, arrows, bucklers, and lances. They all live with the kings, and some of them with other lords, relations of the kings, and lords of the country, and with the salaried governors, and with one another. They are very smart men, and much taken up with their nobility. . . . These Nairs, besides being all of noble descent, have to be armed as knights by the hand of a king or lord with whom they live, and until they have been so equipped they cannot bear arms nor call themselves Nairs. . . . In general, when they are seven years of age, they are immediately sent to school to learn all manner of feats of agility and gymnastics for the use of their weapons.

* E. Hultzsch, South-Indian Inscriptions, III, 2, 1203.

† Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar. Translation. Hakluyt Society, 1866.

First they learn to dance and then to tumble, and for that purpose they render supple all their limbs from their childhood, so that they can bend them in any direction. . . . These Nairs live outside the towns separate from other people on their estates which are fenced in. When they go anywhere, they shout to the peasants, that they may get out of the way where they have to pass; and the peasants do so, and, if they did not do it, the Nairs might kill them without penalty. And, if a peasant were by misfortune to touch a Nair lady, her relations would immediately kill her, and likewise the man that touched her and all his relations. This, they say, is done to avoid all opportunity of mixing the blood with that of the peasants. . . . These are very clean and well-dressed women, and they hold it in great honour to know how to please men. They have a belief amongst them that the woman who dies a virgin does not go to paradise."

Writing in the eighteenth century, Hamilton states * that "it was an ancient custom for the Samorin (Zamorin) to reign but twelve years, and no longer. If he died before his term was expired, it saved him a troublesome ceremony of cutting his own throat on a public scaffold erected for that purpose. He first made a feast for all his nobility and gentry, who were very numerous. After the feast he saluted his guests, went on the scaffold, and very neatly cut his own throat in the view of the assembly. His body was, a little while after, burned with great pomp and ceremony, and the grandees elected a new Samorin. Whether that custom was a religious or a civil ceremony I know not, but it is now laid aside, and a new custom is followed by the modern Samorin, that a jubilee is

* New Account of the East Indies, 1744.

proclaimed throughout his dominion at the end of twelve years, and a tent is pitched for him in a spacious plain, and a great feast is celebrated for ten or twelve days with mirth and jollity, guns firing night and day, so at the end of the feast any four of the guests that have a mind to gain a crown by a desperate action in fighting their way through thirty or forty thousand of his guards, and kill the Samorin in his tent, he that kills him succeeds him in his empire. In Anno 1695 one of these jubilees happened, and the tent pitched near Ponnany, a sea-port of his about fifteen leagues to the southward of Calicut. There were but three men that would venture on that desperate action, who fell on, with sword and target, among the guards, and, after they had killed and wounded many, were themselves killed. One of the desperadoes had a nephew of fifteen or sixteen years of age that kept close by his uncle in the attack on the guards, and, when he saw him fall, the youth got through the guards into the tent, and made a stroke at his Majesty's head, and had certainly dispatched him if a large brass lamp which was burning over his head had not marred the blow, but, before he could make another, he was killed by the guards, and I believe the same Samorin reigns yet."

It is noted by Sonnerat * that the Nāyars "are the warriors; they have also the privilege of enjoying all the women of their caste. Their arms, which they constantly carry, distinguish them from the other tribes. They are besides known by their insolent haughtiness. When they perceive pariahs, they call out to them, even at a great distance, to get out of their way, and, if any one of these unfortunate people approaches too near a Nair, and through inadvertence touches him, the Nair has a right

* Voyage to the East Indies, 1774 and 1781.

to murder him, which is looked upon as a very innocent action, and for which no complaint is ever made. It is true that the pariahs have one day in the year when all the Nairs they can touch become their slaves, but the Nairs take such precautions to keep out of the way at the time, that an accident of that kind seldom happens." It is further recorded by Buchanan * that "the whole of these Nairs formed the militia of Malayala, directed by the Namburis and governed by the Rajahs. Their chief delight is in arms, but they are more inclined to use them for assassination or surprise, than in the open field. Their submission to their superiors was great, but they exacted deference from those under them with a cruelty and arrogance, rarely practised but among Hindus in their state of independence. A Nair was expected to instantly cut down a Tiar or Mucuai, who presumed to defile him by touching his person; and a similar fate awaited a slave, who did not turn out of the road as a Nair passed."

Nāyar is commonly said to be derived from the Sanskrit Nāyaka, a leader, and to be cognate with Naik, and Nayudu or Naidu. In this connection, Mr. L. Moore writes † that "if a reference is made to the Anglo-Indian Glossary (Hobson-Jobson) by Yule and Burnell, it will be found that the term Naik or Nayakan, and the word Nayar are derived from the same Sanskrit original, and there is a considerable amount of evidence to show that the Nayars of Malabar are closely connected by origin with the Nayakans of Vijayanagar. ‡ Xavier, writing in 1542 to 1544, makes frequent references to men whom he calls Badages, who are said to have been

* Journey through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, 1807.

† Malabar Law and Custom, 3rd ed., 1905.

‡ *Vide* R. Sewell. A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagar), 1900.

collectors of royal taxes, and to have grievously oppressed Xavier's converts among the fishermen of Travancore.* Dr. Caldwell, alluding to Xavier's letters, says † that these Badages were no doubt Vadages or men from the North, and is of opinion that a Jesuit writer of the time who called them Nayars was mistaken, and that they were really Nayakans from Madura. I believe, however, that the Jesuit rightly called them Nayars, for I find that Father Organtino, writing in 1568, speaks of these Badages as people from Narasinga (a kingdom north of Madura, lying close to Bishnaghur).‡ Bishnaghur is, of course, Vijayanagar, and the kingdom of Narasinga was the name frequently given by the Portuguese to Vijayanagar. Almost every page of Mr. Sewell's interesting book on Vijayanagar bears testimony to the close connection between Vijayanagar and the West Coast. Dr. A. C. Burnell tells us that the kings who ruled Vijayanagar during the latter half of the fourteenth century belonged to a low non-Aryan caste, namely, that of Canarese cow-herds.§ They were therefore closely akin to the Nayars, one of the leading Rajas among whom at the present time, although officially described as a Samanta, is in reality of the Eradi, *i.e.*, cow-herd caste.‖ It is remarkable that Colonel (afterwards Sir Thomas) Munro, in the memorandum written by him in 1802 ¶ on the Poligars of the Ceded Districts,

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* Father Coleridge's Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier.

† History of Tinnevelly.

‡ Coleridge's Xavier.

§ Burnell. Translation of the Daya Vibhaga, Introduction. *Vide* also Elements of South Indian Palæography (2nd ed., p. 109), where Dr. Burnell says that it is certain that the Vijayanagar kings were men of low caste.

‖ *Vide* Glossary, Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, p. 2, and Day's Land of the Permauls, p. 44.

¶ Fifth Report of the Committee on the affairs of the East India Company, II, 499, 530. Reprint by Higginbotham, Madras.

when dealing with the cases of a number of Poligars who were direct descendants of men who had been chiefs under the kings of Vijayanagar, calls them throughout his report Naique or Nair, using the two names as if they were identical. Further investigation as to the connection of the Nayars of Malabar with the kingdom of Vijayanagar would, I believe, lead to interesting results." In the Journal of the Hon. John Lindsay (1783) it is recorded * that "we received information that our arms were still successful on the Malabar coast, and that our army was now advancing into the inland country; whilst the Nayars and Polygars that occupy the jungles and mountains near Seringapatam, thinking this a favourable opportunity to regain their former independence, destroyed the open country, and committed as many acts of barbarity as Hyder's army had done in the Carnatic."

"Some," Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes in a note on the Nāyars of Travancore, "believe that Nāyar is derived from Nāga (serpents), as the Aryans so termed the earlier settlers of Malabar on account of the special adoration which they paid to snakes. The Travancore Nāyars are popularly known as Malayāla Sūdras—a term which contrasts them sharply with the Pāndi or foreign Sūdras, of whom a large number immigrated into Travancore in later times. Another name by which Nāyars are sometimes known is Malayāli, but other castes, which have long inhabited the Malayālam country, can lay claim to this designation with equal propriety. The most general title of the Nāyars is Pillai (child), which was once added to the names of the Brāhman dwellers in the south. It must, in all probability, have

* Lives of the Lindsays. By Lord Lindsay, 1849.

been after the Brāhmans changed their title to Aiyar (father), by which name the non-Brāhman people invariably referred to them, that Sūdras began to be termed Pillai. We find that the Vellālas of the Tamil country and the Nāyars of Travancore called themselves Pillai from very early times. The formal ceremony of paying down a sum of money, and obtaining a distinction direct from the Sovereign was known as tirumukham pitikkuka, or catching the face of the king, and enabled the recipients to add, besides the honorary suffix Pillai, the distinctive prefix Kanakku, or accountant, to their name. So important were the privileges conferred by it that even Sanku Annavi, a Brāhman Dalava, obtained it at the hand of the reigning Mahārāja, and his posterity at Vempannūr have enjoyed the distinction until the present day. The titles Pillai and Kanakku are never used together. The name of an individual would be, for example, either Krishna Pillai or Kanakku Rāman Krishnan, Rāman being the name of the Karanavan or the maternal uncle. A higher title, Chempakaraman, corresponds to the knighthood of mediæval times, and was first instituted by Mahārāja Marthanda Varma in memory, it is said, of his great Prime Minister Rāma Aiyyan Dalawa. The individual, whom it was the king's pleasure to honour, was taken in procession on the back of an elephant through the four main streets of the fort, and received by the Prime Minister, seated by his side, and presented with pān-supāri (betel). Rare as this investiture is in modern times, there are many ancient houses, to which this title of distinction is attached in perpetuity. The title Kanakku is often enjoyed with it, the maternal uncle's name being dropped, *e.g.*, Kanakku Chempakaraman Krishnan. Tambi (younger brother) is another title prevalent in

Travancore. It is a distinctive suffix to the names of Nāyar sons of Travancore Sovereigns. But, in ancient times, this title was conferred on others also, in recognition of merit. Tambis alone proceed in palanquins, and appear before the Mahārāja without a head-dress. The consorts of Mahārājas are selected from these families. If a lady from outside is to be accepted as consort, she is generally adopted into one of these families. The title Karta, or doer, appears also to have been used as a titular name by some of the rulers of Madura. [At the Madras census, 1901, Kartākkal was returned by Balijas claiming to be descendants of the Nāyak kings of Madura and Tanjore.] The Tekkumkur and Vadakkumkur Rājas in Malabar are said to have first conferred the title Karta on certain influential Nāyar families. In social matters the authority of the Karta was supreme, and it was only on important points that higher authorities were called on to intercede. All the Kartas belong to the Illam sub-division of the Nāyar caste. The title Kuruppu, though assumed by other castes than Nāyars, really denotes an ancient section of the Nāyars, charged with various functions. Some were, for instance, instructors in the use of arms, while others were superintendents of maid-servants in the royal household. Writing concerning the Zamorin of Calicut about 1500 A.D., Barbosa states that "the king has a thousand waiting women, to whom he gives regular pay, and they are always at the court to sweep the palaces and houses of the king, and he does this for the State, because fifty would be enough to sweep." When a Mahārāja of Travancore enters into a matrimonial alliance, it is a Kuruppu who has to call out the full title of the royal consort, Panappillai Amma, after the presentation of silk and cloth has been performed. The title Panikkar is derived from pani, work.

It was the Panikkars who kept kalaris, or gymnastic and military schools, but in modern times many Panikkars have taken to the teaching of letters. Some are entirely devoted to temple service, and are consequently regarded as belonging to a division of Mārans, rather than of Nāyars. The title Kaimal is derived from kai, hand, signifying power. In former times, some Kaimals were recognised chieftains, *e.g.*, the Kaimal of Vaikkattillam in North Travancore. Others were in charge of the royal treasury, which, according to custom, could not be seen even by the kings except in their presence. "Neither could they," Barbosa writes, "take anything out of the treasury without a great necessity, and by the counsel of this person and certain others." The titles Unnithan and Valiyathan were owned by certain families in Central Travancore, which were wealthy and powerful. They were to some extent self-constituted justices of the peace, and settled all ordinary disputes arising in the kara where they dwelt. The title Menavan, or Menon, means a superior person, and is derived from mel, above, and avan he. The recipient of the title held it for his lifetime, or it was bestowed in perpetuity on his family, according to the amount of money paid down as atiyara. As soon as an individual was made a Menon, he was presented with an ola (palmyra leaf for writing on) and an iron style as symbols of the office of accountant, which he was expected to fill. In British Malabar even now every amsam or revenue village has an accountant or writer called Menon. The title Menokki, meaning one who looks over or superintends, is found only in British Malabar, as it was exclusively a creation of the Zamorin. [They are, I gather, accountants in temples.]

"There are numerous sub-divisions comprised under the general head Nāyar, of which the most important,

mentioned in vernacular books, are Kiriyam, Illam, Svarupam, Itacheri or Idacheri, Pallichan, Ashtikkurichchi, Vattakātan, Otatu, Pulikkal, Vyapari, Vilakkitalavan, and Veluthetan. Of these Ashtikkurichchi and Pulikkal are divisions of Mārān, Vyapari is a division of Chettis, and Vilakkitalavan and Veluthetan are barbers and washermen respectively.

"The chief divisions of Nāyars, as now recognised, are as follows:—

1. Kiriyam, a name said to be a corruption of the Sanskrit griha, meaning house. This represents the highest class, the members of which were, in former times, not obliged to serve Brāhmans and Kshatriyas.

2. Illakkar.—The word illam indicates a Nambūtiri Brāhman's house, and tradition has it that every illam family once served an illam. But, in mediæval times, any Nāyar could get himself recognised as belonging to the Illam division, provided that a certain sum of money, called adiyara, was paid to the Government. The Illakkar are prohibited from the use of fish, flesh, and liquor, but the prohibition is not at the present day universally respected. In some parts of Malabar, they have moulded many of their habits in the truly Brāhmanical style.

3. Svarupakkar.—Adherents of the Kshatriya families of Travancore. The members of the highest group, Parūr Svarupam, have their purificatory rites performed by Mārāns. It is stated that they were once the Illakkar servants of one Karuttetathu Nambutiri, who was the feudal lord of Parūr, and afterwards became attached to the royal household which succeeded to that estate, thus becoming Parūr Svarupakkar.

4. Padamangalam and Tamil Padam were not originally Nāyars, but immigrants from the Tamil

country. They are confined to a few localities in Travancore, and until recently there was a distinctive difference in regard to dress and ornaments between the Tamil Padam and the ordinary Nāyars. The occupation of the Padamangalakkar is temple service, such as sweeping, carrying lamps during processions, etc. The Tamil Padakkar are believed to have taken to various kinds of occupation, and, for this reason, to have become merged with other sections.

5. Vāthi or Vātti.—This name is not found in the Jatinirnaya, probably because it had not been differentiated from Mārān. The word is a corruption of vāzhti, meaning praying for happiness, and refers to their traditional occupation. They use a peculiar drum, called nantuni. Some call themselves Daivampatis, or wards of God, and follow the makkathāyam system of inheritance (in the male line).

6. Itacheri or Idacheri, also called Pantaris in South Travancore. They are herdsmen, and vendors of milk, butter and curds. The name suggests a relation of some kind to the Idaiyan caste of the Tamil country.

7. Karuvelam, known also by other names, such as Kappiyara and Tiruvattar. Their occupation is service in the palace of the Mahārāja, and they are the custodians of his treasury and valuables. Fifty-two families are believed to have been originally brought from Kolathanād, when a member thereof was adopted into the Travancore royal family.

8. Arikuravan.—A name, meaning those who reduced the quantity of rice out of the paddy given to them to husk at the temple of Kazhayakkuttam near Trivandrum, by which they were accosted by the local chieftain.

9. Pallichchan.—Bearers of palanquins for Brāhmans and Malabar chieftains. They are also employed

as their attendants, to carry their sword and shield before them.

10. Vandikkāran.—A name, meaning cartmen, for those who supply fuel to temples, and cleanse the vessels belonging thereto.

11. Kuttina.—The only heiress of a Svarupam tarwad is said to have been a maid-servant in the Vadakketam Brāhman's house, and her daughter's tāli-kettu ceremony to have been celebrated in her master's newly-built cowshed. The bride was called kuttilachchi, or bride in a cowshed, and her descendants were named Kuttina Nāyars. They intermarry among themselves, and, having no priests of their own, obtain purified water from Brāhmans to remove the effects of pollution.

12. Matavar.—Also known as Puliyattu, Veliyattu, and Kāllur Nāyars. They are believed to have been good archers in former times.

13. Otatu, also called Kusa. Their occupation is to tile or thatch temples and Brāhman houses.

14. Mantalayi.—A tract of land in the Kalkulam taluk, called Mantalachchi Konam, was granted to them by the State. They are paid mourners, and attend at the Trivandrum palace when a death occurs in the royal family.

15. Manigrāmam.—Believed to represent Hindu recoveries from early conversion to Christianity. Manigrāmam was a portion of Cranganore, where early Christian immigrants settled.

16. Vattaykkatan, better known in Travancore as Chakala Nāyars, form in many respects the lowest sub-division. They are obliged to stand outside the sacrificial stones (balikallu) of a sanctuary, and are not allowed to take the title Pillai. Pulva is a title of distinction among them. One section of them is engaged

in the hereditary occupation of oil-pressing, and occupies a lower position in the social scale than the other."

The following list of "clans" among the Nāyars of Malabar whom he examined anthropometrically is given by Mr. F. Fawcett * :—

Kiriyattil.	Vangilōth.
Sudra..	Kitāvu.
Kurup.	Pallichan.
Nambiyar.	Muppathināyiran.
Urāli.	Viyāpāri or Rāvāri.
Nalliōden.	Attikurissi.
Viyyūr.	Manavalan.
Akattu Charna.	Adungādi.
Purattu Charna.	Adiōdi.
Vattakkād.	Amayengolam.

"The Kurup, Nambiyar Viyyūr, Manavālan, Vengōlan, Nelliōden, Adungādi, Kitāvu, Adiōdi, Āmayengolam, all superior clans, belong, properly speaking, to North Malabar. The Kiriyattil, or Kiriyam, is the highest of all the clans in South Malabar, and is supposed to comprise, or correspond with the group of clans first named from North Malabar. The Akattu Charna clan is divided into two sub-clans, one of which looks to the Zamorin as their lord, and the other owns lordship to minor lordlings, as the Tirumulpād of Nilambūr. The former are superior, and a woman of the latter may mate with a man of the former, but not *vice versâ*. In the old days, every Nāyar chief had his Charnavar, or adherents. The Purattu Charna are the outside adherents, or fighters and so on, and the Akattu Charna are the inside adherents—clerks and domestics. The clan from which the former were drawn is superior to the latter. The Urālis are said to have been masons; the Pallichans manchīl

* Madras Museum Bull., III, 3, 1901.

bearers.* The Sūdra clan supplies female servants in the houses of Nambūdiris. The Vattakkād (or Chakkingal : chakku, oil press) clan, whose proper *métier* is producing gingelly or cocoanut oil with the oil-mill, is the lowest of all, excepting, I think, the Pallichan. Indeed, in North Malabar, I have frequently been told by Nāyars of the superior clans that they do not admit the Vattakkād to be Nāyars, and say that they have adopted the honorary affix Nāyar to their names quite recently. There is some obscurity as regards the sub-divisions of the Vattakkād clan. To the north of Calicut, in Kurumbranād, they are divided into the Undiātuna, or those who pull (to work the oil-machine by hand), and the Murivechchu-ātune, or those who tie or fasten bullocks, to work the oil-machine. Yet further north, at Tellicherry and thereabouts, there are no known sub-divisions, while in Ernād, to the eastward, the clan is divided into the Veluttātu (white) and Karuttātu (black). The white have nothing to do with the expression and preparation of oil, which is the hereditary occupation of the black. The white may eat with Nāyars of any clan ; the black can eat with no others outside their own clan. The black sub-clan is strictly endogamous ; the other, the superior sub-clan, is not. Their women may marry men of any other clan, the Pallichchan excepted. Union by marriage, or whatever the function may be named, is permissible between most of the other clans, the rule by which a woman may never unite herself with her inferior being always observed. She may unite herself with a man of her own clan, or with a man of any superior clan, or with a Nambūtiri, an Embrāntiri, or any other Brāhman,

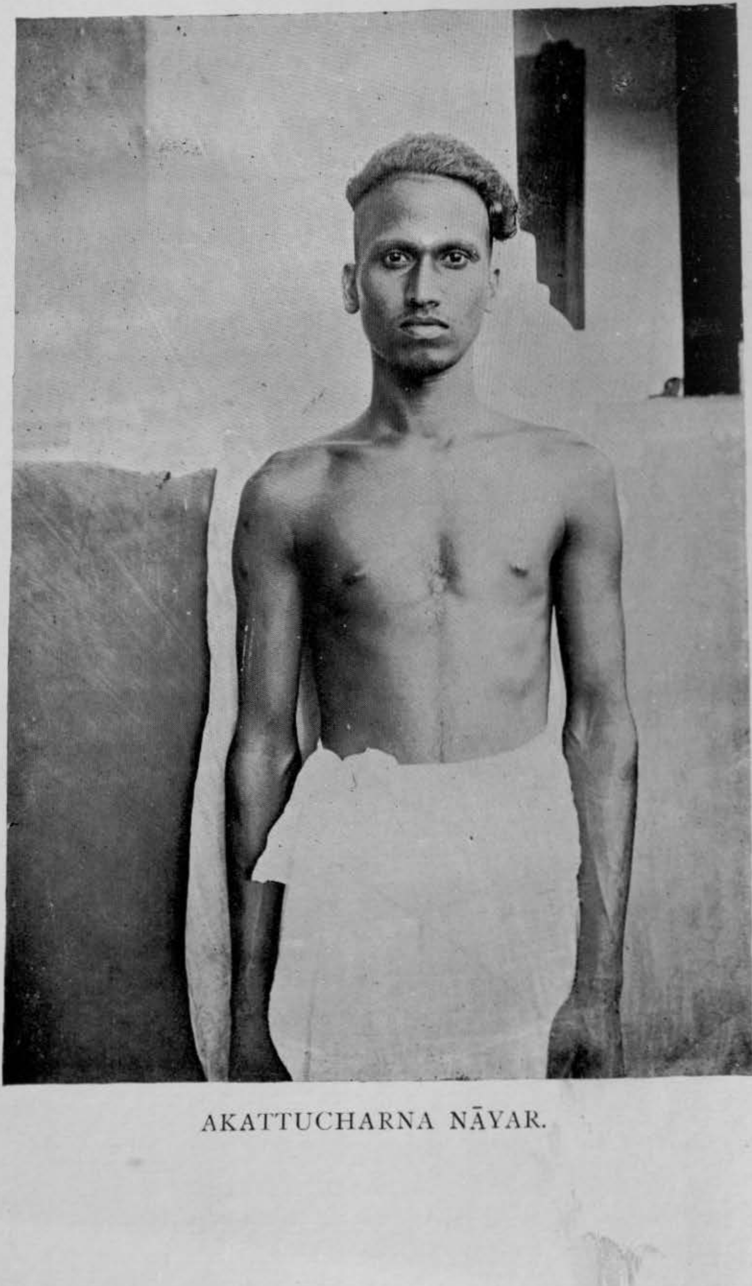
* A manchil is a conveyance carried on men's shoulders, and more like a hammock slung on a pole, with a flat covering over it, than a palanquin.

or with one of the small sects coming between the Brāhmans and the Nāyars. But she cannot under any circumstances unite herself with a man of a clan, which is inferior to hers. Nor can she eat with those of a clan inferior to her; a man may, and does without restriction. Her children by an equal in race and not only in mere social standing, but never those by one who is racially inferior, belong to her taravād.* The children of the inferior mothers are never brought into the taravād of the superior fathers, *i.e.*, they are never brought into it to belong to it, but they may live there. And, where they do so, they cannot enter the taravād kitchen, or touch the women while they are eating. Nor are they allowed to touch their father's corpse. They may live in the taravād under these and other disabilities, but are never of it. The custom, which permits a man to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than himself, and prohibits a woman from exercising the same liberty, is called the rule of anulōmam and pratilōmam. Dr. Gundert derives anulōmam from anu, with lōmam (rōmam), hair, or going with the hair or grain. So pratilōmam means going against the hair or grain. According to this usage, a Nāyar woman, consorting with a man of a higher caste, follows the hair, purifies the blood, and raises the progeny in social estimation. By cohabitation with a man of a lower division (clan) or caste, she is guilty of pratilōmam, and, if the difference of caste were admittedly great, she would be turned out of her family, to prevent the whole family being boycotted. A corollary of this custom is that a Nambūtiri Brāhman father cannot touch his own children by his Nāyar consort without bathing

* Tarwād or taravād, a marumakkathayam family, consisting of all the descendants in the female line of one common female ancestor.

afterwards to remove pollution. The children in the marumakkatayam family belong, of course, to their mother's family, clan, and caste. They are Nāyars, not Nambūtiris. The Nāyars of North Malabar are held to be superior all along the line, clan for clan, to those of South Malabar, which is divided from the north by the river Korapuzha, seven miles north of Calicut, so that a woman of North Malabar would not unite herself to a man of her own clan name of South Malabar. A Nāyar woman of North Malabar cannot pass northward beyond the frontier; she cannot pass the hills to the eastward; and she cannot cross the Korapuzha to the south. It is tabu. The women of South Malabar are similarly confined by custom, breach of which involves forfeiture of caste. To this rule there is an exception, and of late years the world has come in touch with the Malayāli, who nowadays goes to the University, studies medicine and law in the Presidency town (Madras), or even in far off England. Women of the relatively inferior Akattu Charna clan are not under quite the same restrictions as regards residence as are those of most of the other clans; so, in these days of free communications, when Malayālis travel, and frequently reside far from their own country, they often prefer to select wives from this Akattu Charna clan. But the old order changeth everywhere, and nowadays Malayālis who are in the Government service, and obliged to reside far away from Malabar, and a few who have taken up their abode in the Presidency town, have wrenched themselves free of the bonds of custom, and taken with them their wives who are of clans other than the Akattu Charna. The interdiction to travel, and the possible exception to it in the case of Akattu Charna women, has been explained to me in this way. The Nāyar woman observes pollution for three days during

menstruation. While in her period, she may not eat or drink with any other member of the taravād, and on the fourth day she must be purified. Purification is known as māttu (change), and it is effected by the washerwoman, who, in some parts of South Malabar, is of the Mannān or Vannān caste, whose *métier* is to wash for the Nāyars and Nambūtiris, but who is, as a rule, the washerwoman of the Tīyan caste, giving her, after her bath, one of her own cloths to wear (māttu, change of raiment) instead of the soiled cloth, which she takes away to wash. Pollution, which may come through a death in the family, through child-birth, or menstruation, must be removed by māttu. Until it is done, the woman is out of caste. It must be done in the right way at the right moment, under pain of the most unpleasant social consequences. How that the influential rural local magnate wreaks vengeance on a taravād by preventing the right person giving māttu to the women is well known in Malabar. He could not, with all the sections of the Penal Code at his disposal, inflict greater injury. Now the Nāyar woman is said to feel compelled to remain in Malabar, or within her own part of it, in order to be within reach of māttu. My informant tells me that, the Vannān caste being peculiar to Malabar, the Nāyar women cannot go where these are not to be found, and that māttu must be done by one of that caste. But I know, from my own observation in the most truly conservative localities, in Kurumbranād for example, where the Nāyar has a relative superiority, that the washerman is as a rule a Tīyan; and I cannot but think that the interdiction has other roots than those involved in māttu. It does not account for the superstition against crossing water, which has its counterparts elsewhere in the world. The origin of the interdiction to cross the river southwards



AKATTUCHARNA NĀYAR.

has been explained to me as emanating from a command of the Kōlatirri Rājah in days gone by, when, the Arabs having come to the country about Calicut, there was a chance of the women being seized and taken as wives. The explanation is somewhat fanciful. The prohibition to cross the river to the northwards is supposed to have originated in much the same way. As bearing on this point, I may mention that the Nāyar women living to the east of Calicut cannot cross the river backwater, and come into the town." It may be noted in this connection that the Paikāra river on the Nīlgiri hills is sacred to the Todas, and, for fear of mishap from arousing the wrath of the river-god, a pregnant Toda woman will not venture to cross it. No Toda will use the river water for any purpose, and they do not touch it, unless they have to ford it. They then walk through it, and, on reaching the opposite bank, bow their heads. Even when they walk over the Paikāra bridge, they take their hands out of the putkuli (body-cloth) as a mark of respect.

The complexity of the sub-divisions among the Nāyars in North Malabar is made manifest by the following account thereof in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "There are exogamous sub-divisions (perhaps corresponding to original tarwāds) called kulams, and these are grouped to form the sub-castes which are usually endogamous. It is quite impossible to attempt a complete account of the scheme, but to give some idea of its nature one example may be taken, and dealt with in some detail; and for this purpose the portion of Kurumbranād known as Payyanād will serve. This is the country between the Kōttapuzha and Pōrapuzha rivers, and is said to have been given by a Rāja of Kurumbranād to a certain Ambādi Kōvilagam Tamburātti (the stānam or title of the senior lady of the Zāmorin Rāja's family). In

this tract or nād there were originally six stānis or chieftains, who ruled, under the Rāja, with the assistance, or subject to the constitutional control, of four assemblies of Nāyars called Kūttams. Each kūttam had its hereditary president. In this tract there are seven groups of kulams. The highest includes twelve kulams, Vengalat, Pattillat, Vīyyūr, Nelliōt, Atunkudi, Amayangalat, Nellōli, Nilanchēri, Rendillat, Pulliyāni, Orakātteri, and Venmēri. Of these, the Pattillat and Rendillat (members of the ten and members of the two illams or houses) affix the title Adiyōdi to their names, the last three affix the title Nambiyar, and the rest affix Nāyar. Of the six stānis already mentioned, three, with the title of Adiyōdi, belong to the Vengalat kulam, while two of the presidents of kuttams belonged to the Pattillat kulam. The younger members of the stāni houses are called kidavu. It is the duty of women of Viyyūr and Nelliōt kulams to join in the bridal procession of members of the Vengalat kulam, the former carrying lamps, and the latter salvers containing flowers, while the Rendillat Adiyōdis furnish cooks to the same class. Pattillat Adiyōdis and Orakātteri Nambiyars observe twelve days' pollution, while all the other kulams observe fifteen. The second group consists of six kulams, Eravattūr, Ara-Eravattūr (or half Eravattūr), and Attikōdan Nāyars, Tonderi Kidāvus, Punnan Nambiyars, and Mēnōkkis. All these observe fifteen days' pollution. The third group consists of three kulams, Tacchōli to which the remaining three stānis belong, Kōthōli, and Kuruvattānchēri. All affix Nāyar to their names, and observe fifteen days' pollution. The fourth group consists of three kulams, Peruvānian Nambiyars, Chellādan Nāyars, and Vennapālan Nāyars. All three observe fifteen days' pollution. The name Peruvānian means great or

principal oil-man ; and it is the duty of this caste to present the Kurumbranād Rāja with oil on the occasion of his formal installation. The fifth group consists of the three kulams, Mannangazhi, Paramchela, and Pallikara Nāyars, all observing fifteen days' pollution. A member of the first-named class has to place an āmanapalaga (the traditional seat of Nambūdiris and other high castes) for the Kurumbranād Rāja to sit on at the time of his installation, while a member of the second has to present him with a cloth on the same occasion. The sixth group consists of four kiriyams named Patam, Tulu, Manan, and Ottu respectively, and has the collective name of Rāvāri. The seventh group consists of six kulams, Kandōn, Kannankōdan, Kotta, Karumba, Kundakollavan, and Panakādan Nāyars. All observe fifteen days' pollution, and the women of these six kulams have certain duties to perform in connection with the purification of women of the Vengalat, Pattillat, and Orakatteri kulams. Besides these seven groups, there are a few other classes without internal sub-divisions. One such class is known as Pāppini Nāyar. A woman of this class takes the part of the Brāhmini woman (Nambissan) at the tāli-kettu kalyanam of girls belonging to the kulams included in the third group. Another class called Pālattavan takes the place of the Attikurissi Nāyar at the funeral ceremonies of the same three kulams."

In illustration of the custom of polyandry among the Nāyars of Malabar in by-gone days, the following extracts may be quoted. "On the continent of India," it is recorded in Ellis' edition of the Kural, "polyandry is still said to be practiced in Orissa, and among particular tribes in other parts. In Malayālam, as is well known, the vision of Plato in his ideal republic is more completely

realised, the women among the Nāyars not being restricted to family or number, but, after she has been consecrated by the usual rites before the nuptial fire, in which ceremony any indifferent person may officiate as the representative of her husband, being in her intercourse with the other sex only restrained by her inclinations; provided that the male with whom she associates be of an equal or superior tribe. But it must be stated, for the glory of the female character, that, notwithstanding the latitude thus given to the Nāyattis, and that they are thus left to the guidance of their own free will and the play of their own fancy (which in other countries has not always been found the most efficient check on the conduct of either sex), it rarely happens that they cohabit with more than one person at the same time. Whenever the existing connexion is broken, whether from incompatibility of temper, disgust, caprice, or any of the thousand vexations by which from the frailty of nature domestic happiness is liable to be disturbed, the woman seeks another lover, the man another mistress. But it mostly happens that the bond of paternity is here, as elsewhere, too strong to be shaken off, and that the uninfluenced and uninterested union of love, when formed in youth, continues even in the decline of age."

In a note on the Nāyars in the sixteenth century, Cæsar Fredericke writes as follows.* "These Nairi having their wives common amongst themselves, and when any of them goe into the house of any of these women, he leaveth his sworde and target at the door, and the time that he is there, there dare not be any so

* The Voyage and Travell of M. Cæsar Fredericke, Merchant of Venice, into the East Indies and beyond the Indies (1563). Translation. Hakluyt Voyages, V, 394.

hardie as to come into that house. The king's children shall not inherite the kingdom after their father, because they hold this opinion, that perchance they were not begotten of the king their father, but of some other man, therefore they accept for their king one of the sonnes of the king's sisters, or of some other woman of the blood roiall, for that they be sure that they are of the blood roiall."

In his "New Account of the East Indies, (1727)" Hamilton wrote: "The husbands," of whom, he said, there might be twelve, but no more at one time, "agree very well, for they cohabit with her in their turns, according to their priority of marriage, ten days more or less according as they can fix a term among themselves, and he that cohabits with her maintains her in all things necessary for his time, so that she is plentifully provided for by a constant circulation. When the man that cohabits with her goes into her house he leaves his arms at the door, and none dare remove them or enter the house on pain of death. When she proves with child, she nominates its father, who takes care of his education after she has suckled it, and brought it to walk or speak, but the children are never heirs to their father's estate, but the father's sister's children are."

Writing in the latter half of the eighteenth century, Grose says * that "it is among the Nairs that principally prevails the strange custom of one wife being common to a number; in which point the great power of custom is seen from its rarely or never producing any jealousies or quarrels among the co-tenants of the same woman. Their number is not so much limited by any specific

* Travels to the East Indies.

law as by a kind of tacit convention, it scarcely ever happening that it exceeds six or seven. The woman, however, is under no obligation to admit above a single attachment, though not less respected for using her privilege to its utmost extent. If one of the husbands happens to come to the house when she is employed with another, he knows that circumstance by certain signals left at the door that his turn is not come, and departs very resignedly." Writing about the same time, Sonnerat * says that "these Brāhmans do not marry, but have the privilege of enjoying all the Nairesses. This privilege the Portuguese who were esteemed as a great caste, obtained and preserved, till their drunkenness and debauchery betrayed them into a commerce with all sorts of women. The following right is established by the customs of the country. A woman without shame may abandon herself to all men who are not of an inferior caste to her own, because the children (notwithstanding what Mr. de Voltaire says) do not belong to the father, but to the mother's brother; they become his legitimate heirs at their birth, even of the crown if he is king." In his 'Voyages and Travels', Kerr writes as follows. † "By the laws of their country these Nayres cannot marry, so that no one has any certain or acknowledged son or father; all their children being born of mistresses, with each of whom three or four Nayres cohabit by agreement among themselves. Each one of this cofraternity dwells a day in his turn with the joint mistress, counting from noon of one day to the same time of the next, after which he departs, and another

* Voyage to the East Indies, 1774 and 1781.

† R. Kerr. General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels, 1811, History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese between the years 1497 and 1525, from the original Portuguese of Herman Lopes de Castaneda.

comes for the like time. Thus they spend their time without the care or trouble of wives and children, yet maintain their mistresses well according to their rank. Any one may forsake his mistress at his pleasure; and, in like manner, the mistress may refuse admittance to any one of her lovers when she pleases. These mistresses are all gentlewomen of the Nayre caste, and the Nayres, besides being prohibited from marrying, must not attach themselves to any woman of a different rank. Considering that there are always several men attached to one woman, the Nayres never look upon any of the children born of their mistresses as belonging to them, however strong a resemblance may subsist, and all inheritances among the Nayres go to their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, born of the same mothers, all relationship being counted only by female consanguinity and descent. This strange law prohibiting marriage was established that they might have neither wives nor children on whom to fix their love and attachment; and that, being free from all family cares, they might more willingly devote themselves entirely to warlike service." The term son of ten fathers is used as a term of abuse among Nāyars to this day.* Tīpū Sultān is said to have issued the following proclamation to the Nāyars, on the occasion of his visit to Calicut in 1788. "And, since it is a practice with you for one woman to associate with ten men, and you leave your mothers and sisters unconstrained in their obscene practices, and are thence all born in adultery, and are more shameless in your connections than the beasts of the field; I hereby require you to forsake these sinful practices, and live like the rest of mankind." †

* Wigram, Malabar Law and Custom, Ed. 1900.

† T. A. Kalyanakrishna Aiyar, Malabar Quart. Review, II, 1903.

As to the present existence or non-existence of polyandry I must call recent writers into the witness-box. The Rev. S. Mateer, Mr. Fawcett writes,* "informed me ten years ago—he was speaking of polyandry among the Nāyars of Travancore—that he had 'known an instance of six brothers keeping two women, four husbands to one, and two to the other. In a case where two brothers cohabited with one woman, and one was converted to Christianity, the other brother was indignant at the Christian's refusal to live any longer in this condition.' I have not known an admitted instance of polyandry amongst the Nāyars of Malabar at the present day, but there is no doubt that, if it does not exist now (and I think it does here and there), it certainly did not long ago." Mr. Gopal Panikkar says † that "to enforce this social edict upon the Nairs, the Brāhmans made use of the powerful weapon of their aristocratic ascendancy in the country, and the Nairs readily submitted to the Brāhman supremacy. Thus it came about that the custom of concubinage, so freely indulged in by the Brāhmans with Nair women, obtained such firm hold upon the country that it has only been strengthened by the lapse of time. At the present day there are families, especially in the interior of the district, who look upon it as an honour to be thus united with Brāhmans. But a reaction has begun to take place against this feeling, and Brāhman alliances are invariably looked down upon in respectable Nair tarwads. This reactionary feeling took shape in the Malabar Marriage Act." Mr. Justice K. Narayana Marar says: "There is nothing strange or to be ashamed of in the fact that the Nāyars were originally of a stock that practiced polyandry, nor if the

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* *Op cit.*

† Malabar and its Folk, 1900.



NĀYAR FEMALES.

practice continued till recently. Hamilton and Buchanan say that, among the Nāyars of Malabar, a woman has several husbands, but these are not brothers. These travellers came to Malabar in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. There is no reason whatever to suppose that they were not just recording what they saw. For I am not quite sure whether, even now, the practice is not lurking in some remote nooks and corners of the country." Lastly, Mr. Wigram writes as follows.* "Polyandry may now be said to be dead, and, although the issue of a Nāyar marriage are still children of their mother rather than of their father, marriage may be defined as a contract based on mutual consent, and dissoluble at will. It has been well said (by Mr. Logan) that nowhere is the marriage tie, albeit informal, more rigidly observed or respected than it is in Malabar: nowhere is it more jealously guarded, or its neglect more savagely avenged."

In connection with the tāli-kattu kalyānam, or tāli-tying marriage, Mr. Fawcett writes that "the details of this ceremony vary in different parts of Malabar, but the ceremony in some form is essential, and must be performed for every Nāyar girl before she attains puberty." For an account of this ceremony, I must resort, to the evidence of Mr. K. R. Krishna Menon before the Malabar Marriage Commission.†

"The tāli-kattu kalyānam is somewhat analogous to what a dēva-dāsi (dancing-girl) of other countries (districts) undergoes before she begins her profession. Among royal families, and those of certain Edaprabhus, a Kshatriya, and among the Charna sect a Nedungādi is

* Malabar Law and Custom, 1882.

† Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, 1894.

invited to the girl's house at an auspicious hour appointed for the purpose, and, in the presence of friends and castemen, ties a tāli (marriage badge) round her neck, and goes away after receiving a certain fee for his trouble. Among the other sects, the horoscope of the girl is examined along with those of her enangan (a recognised member of one's own class) families, and the boy whose horoscope is found to agree with hers is marked out as a fit person to tie the tāli, and a day is fixed for the tāli-tying ceremony by the astrologer, and information given to the Karanavan * (senior male in a tarwad) of the boy's family. The feast is called ayaniūnu, and the boy is thenceforth called Manavālan or Pillai (bridegroom). From the house in which the Manavālan is entertained a procession is formed, preceded by men with swords, and shields shouting a kind of war-cry. In the meantime a procession starts from the girl's house, with similar men and cries, and headed by a member of her tarwad, to meet the other procession, and, after meeting the Manavālan, he escorts him to the girl's house. After entering the booth erected for the purpose, he is conducted to a seat of honour, and his feet are washed by the brother of the girl, who receives a pair of cloths. The Manavālan is then taken to the centre of the booth, where bamboo mats, carpets and white cloths are spread, and seated there. The brother of the girl then carries her from inside the house, and, after going round the booth three times, places her at the left side of the Manavālan. The father of the girl then presents new cloths tied in a kambli (blanket) to the pair, and with this new cloth (called manthravadi) they change their dress. The wife of the Karanavan of the girl's tarwad, if she be

* The rights and obligations of Karanavans are fully dealt with by Moore, Malabar Law and Custom, 3rd edition, 1905.

of the same caste, then decorates the girl by putting on anklets, etc. The purōhit (officiating priest) called Elayath (a low class of Brāhmans) then gives the tāli to the Manavālan, and the family astrologer shouts muhurtham (auspicious hour), and the Manavālan, putting his sword on the lap, ties the tāli round the neck of the girl, who is then required to hold an arrow and a looking-glass in her hand. In rich families a Brāhmani sings certain songs intended to bless the couple. In ordinary families who cannot procure her presence, a Nāyar, versed in songs, performs the office. The boy and girl are then carried by enangans to a decorated apartment in the inner part of the house, where they are required to remain under a sort of pollution for three days. On the fourth day they bathe in some neighbouring tank (pond) or river, holding each other's hands. After changing their clothes they come home, preceded by a procession. Tom-toms (native drums) and elephants usually form part of the procession, and turmeric water is sprinkled. When they come home, all doors of the house are shut, and the Manavālan is required to force them open. He then enters the house, and takes his seat in the northern wing thereof. The aunt and female friends of the girl then approach, and give sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the boy, and, after taking their meal together from the same leaf, they proceed to the booth, where a cloth is severed into two parts, and each part given to the Manavālan and girl separately in the presence of enangans and friends. The severing of the cloth is supposed to constitute a divorce." "The tearing of the cloth," Mr. Fawcett writes, "is confined to South Malabar. These are the essentials of the ceremony, an adjunct to which is that, in spite of the divorce, the girl observes

death pollution when her Manavālan dies. The same Manavālan may tie the tāli on any number of girls, during the same ceremony or at any other time, and he may be old or young. He is often an elderly holy Brāhman, who receives a small present for his services. The girl may remove the tāli, if she likes, after the fourth day. In some parts of Malabar there is no doubt that the man who performs the rôle of Manavālan is considered to have some right to the girl, but in such case it has been already considered that he is a proper man to enter into sambandham with her."

Of the tāli-kattu kalyānam in Malabar, the following detailed account, mainly furnished by an Urāli Nāyar of Calicut, is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "An auspicious time has to be selected for the purpose, and the preliminary consultation of the astrologer is in itself the occasion of a family gathering. The Manavālan or quasi-bridegroom is chosen at the same time. For the actual kalyānam, two pandals (booths), a small one inside a large one, are erected in front of the padinhātta macchu or central room of the western wing. They are decorated with cloth, garlands, lamps and palm leaves, and the pillars should be of areca palm cut by an Asāri on Sunday, Monday, or Wednesday. The first day's ceremonies open with a morning visit to the temple, where the officiating Brāhman pours water sanctified by mantrams (religious formulæ), and the addition of leaves of mango, peepul and darbha, over the girl's head. This rite is called kalasam maduga. The girl then goes home, and is taken to the macchu, where a hanging lamp with five wicks is lighted. This should be kept alight during all the days of the kalyānam. The girl sits on a piece of pala (*Alstonia scholaris*) wood, which is called a mana. She is elaborately adorned, and some castes

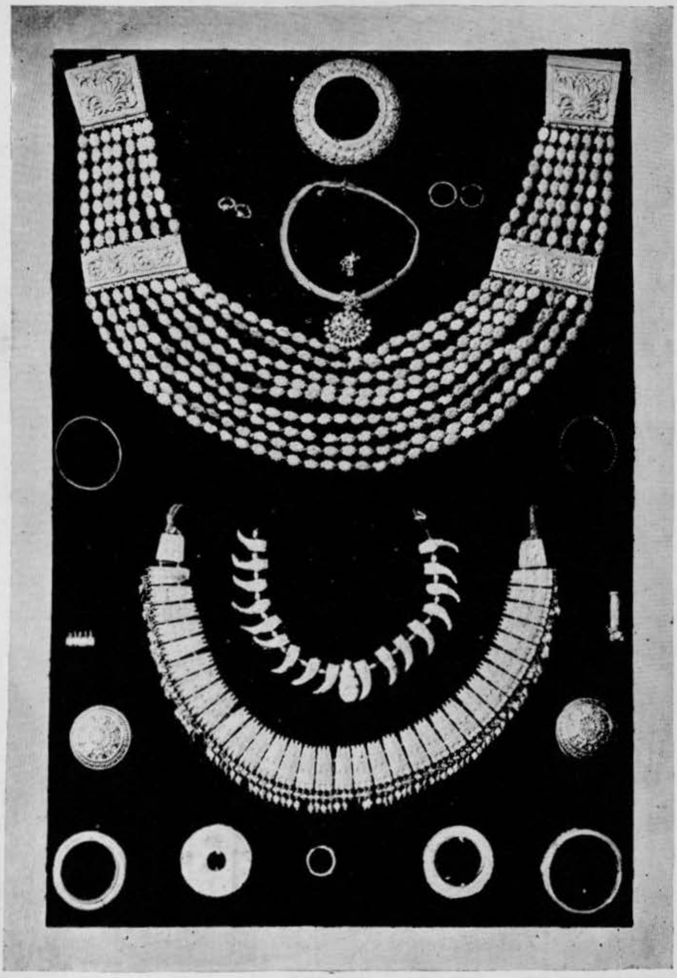
consider a coral necklace an essential. In her right hand she holds a vālkannādi (brass hand mirror), and in her left a charakkal (a highly ornate arrow). In front of the girl are placed, in addition to the five-wicked lamp and nirachaveppu, a metal dish or talam of parched rice, and the eight lucky things known as ashtamangalyam. A woman, termed Brahmini or Pushpini, usually of the Nambissan caste, sits facing her on a three-legged stool (pidam), and renders appropriate and lengthy songs, at the close of which she scatters rice over her. About midday there is a feast, and in the evening songs in the macchu are repeated. Next morning, the ceremonial in the macchu is repeated for the third time, after which the paraphernalia are removed to the nearest tank or to the east of the household well, where the Pushpini sings once more, goes through the form of making the girl's toilet, and ties a cocoanut frond round each of her wrists (kappōla). The girl has then to rise and jump over a kindi (vessel) of water with an unhusked cocoanut placed on the top, overturning it the third time. The party then proceed to the pandal, two men holding a scarlet cloth over the girl as a canopy, and a Chāliyan (weaver) brings two cloths (kōdi vastiram), which the girl puts on. In the evening, the previous day's ceremonial is repeated in the macchu. The third day is the most important, and it is then that the central act of the ceremony is performed. For this the girl sits in the inner pandal richly adorned. In some cases she is carried from the house to the pandal by her karnavan or brother, who makes a number of pradakshinams round the pandal (usually 3 or 7) before he places her in her seat. Before the girl are the various objects already specified, and the hymeneal ditties of the Pushpini open the proceedings. At the auspicious moment the

Manavālan arrives in rich attire. He is often preceded by a sort of body guard with sword and shield who utter a curious kind of cry, and is met at the gate of the girl's house by a bevy of matrons with lamps and salvers decorated with flowers and lights, called talams. A man of the girl's family washes his feet, and he takes his seat in the pandal on the girl's right. Sometimes the girl's father at this stage presents new cloths (mantravādi or mantrokōdi) to the pair, who at once don them. The girl's father takes the tāli, a small round plate of gold about the size of a two-anna bit, with a hole at the top, from the goldsmith who is in waiting, pays him for it, and gives it to the Manavālan. The karnavan or father of the girl asks the astrologer thrice if the moment has arrived, and, as he signifies his assent the third time, the Manavālan ties the tāli round the girl's neck amidst the shouts of those present. The Manavālan carries the girl indoors to the macchu, and feasting brings the day to a close. Tom-toming and other music are of course incessant accompaniments throughout as on other festal occasions, and the women in attendance keep up a curious kind of whistling, called kurava, beating their lips with their fingers. On the fourth day, girl and Manavālan go in procession to the temple richly dressed. The boy, carrying some sort of sword and shield, heads the party. If the family be one of position, he and the girl must be mounted on an elephant. Offerings are made to the deity, and presents to the Brāhmans. They then return home, and, as they enter the house, the Manavālan who brings up the rear is pelted by the boys of the party with plantains, which he wards off with his shield. In other cases, he is expected to make a pretence of forcing the door open. These two usages are no doubt to be classed with those marriage ceremonies which take the

form of a contest between the bridegroom and the bride's relatives, and which are symbolic survivals of marriage by capture. The Manavālan and the girl next partake of food together in the inner pandal—a proceeding which obviously corresponds to the ceremonious first meal of a newly-married couple. The assembled guests are lavishly entertained. The chief Kovilagans and big Nāyar houses will feed 1,000 Brāhmans as well as their own relations, and spend anything up to ten or fifteen thousand rupees on the ceremony."

Concerning the tāli-kettu ceremony in Travancore Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "After the age of eleven, a Nāyar girl becomes too old for this ceremony, though, in some rare instances, it is celebrated after a girl attains her age. As among other castes, ages represented by an odd number, *e.g.*, seven, nine, and eleven, have a peculiar auspiciousness attached to them. Any number of girls, even up to a dozen, may go through the ceremony at one time, and they may include infants under one year—an arrangement prompted by considerations of economy, and rendered possible by the fact that no civil or religious right or liability is contracted as between the parties. The duty of getting the girls of the tarwad 'married' devolves on the karanavan, or in his default on the eldest brother, the father's obligation being discharged by informing him that the time for the ceremony has arrived. The masters of the ceremonies at a Nāyar tāli-kettu in Travancore are called Machchampikkar, *i.e.*, men in the village, whose social status is equal to that of the tarwad in which the ceremony is to be celebrated. At a preliminary meeting of the Machchampikkar, the number of girls for whom the ceremony is to be performed, the bridegrooms, and other details are settled. The horoscopes are examined by the village

astrologer, and those youths in the tarwads who have passed the age of eighteen, and whose horoscopes agree with those of the girls, are declared to be eligible. The ola (palm-leaf) on which the Kaniyan (astrologer) writes his decision is called the muhurta charutu, and the individual who receives it from him is obliged to see that the ceremony is performed on an auspicious day in the near future. The next important item is the fixing of a wooden post in the south-west corner or kannimula of the courtyard. At the construction of the pandal (booth) the Pidakakkar or villagers render substantial aid. The mandapa is decorated with ears of corn, and hence called katirmandapa. It is also called mullapandal. On the night of the previous day the kalati or Brāhman's song is sung. A sumptuous banquet, called ayaniunnu, is given at the girl's house to the party of the young man. The ceremony commences with the bridegroom washing his feet, and taking his seat within the pandal. The girl meanwhile bathes, worships the household deity, and is dressed in new cloths and adorned with costly ornaments. A Brāhman woman ties a thread round the girl's left wrist, and sings a song called Subhadraveli, which deals with the marriage by capture of Subhadra by Arjuna. Then, on the invitation of the girl's mother, who throws a garland round his neck, the bridegroom goes in procession, riding on an elephant, or on foot. The girl's brother is waiting to receive him at the pandal. A leading villager is presented with some money, as if to recompense him for the permission granted by him to commence the ceremony. The girl sits within the mandapa, facing the east, with her eyes closed. The bridegroom, on his arrival, sits on her right. He then receives the minnu (ornament) from the Ilayatu priest, and ties it round the girl's neck. A song is sung called



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ammachampattu, or the song of the maternal uncle. If there are several brides, they sit in a row, each holding in her hand an arrow and a looking-glass, and the ornaments are tied on their necks in the order of their ages. Unless enangans are employed, there is usually only one tāli-tier, whatever may be the number of girls. In cases where, owing to poverty, the expenses of the ceremony cannot be borne, it is simply performed in front of a Brāhman temple, or in the pandaramatam, or house of the village chieftain. In many North Travancore taluks the girl removes her tali as soon as she hears of the tali-tier's death." It is noted by the Rev. S. Mateer * that " a Nair girl of Travancore must get married with the tāli before the age of eleven to avoid reproach from friends and neighbours. In case of need a sword may even be made to represent a bridegroom." Sometimes, when a family is poor, the girl's mother makes an idol of clay, adorns it with flowers, and invests her daughter with the tāli in the presence of the idol.

In an account of the tali-kettu ceremony, in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, it is stated that " the celebration of the ceremony is costly, and advantage is therefore taken of a single occasion in the course of ten or twelve years, at which all girls in a family, irrespective of their ages, and, when parties agree, all girls belonging to families that observe death pollution between one another go through the ceremony. The ceremony opens with the fixing of a post for the construction of a pandal or shed, which is beautifully decorated with cloth, pictures and festoons. The male members of the village are invited, and treated to a feast followed by the distribution

* Journ. Anthrop. Inst., XII, 1883.

of pān-supāri. Every time that a marriage ceremony is celebrated, a member of the family visits His Highness the Rāja with presents, and solicits his permission for the celebration. Such presents are often made to the Nambūdri Jenmis (landlords), by their tenants, and by castes attached to illams. It may be noted that certain privileges, such as sitting on a grass mat, having an elephant procession, drumming, firing of pop-guns, etc., have often to be obtained from the Ruler of the State. The marriage itself begins with the procession to the marriage pandal with the eight auspicious things (ashtamangalyam) and pattiniruththal (seating for song), at the latter of which a Brāhmini or Pushpini sings certain songs based upon suitable Purānic texts. The girls and other female members of the family, dressed in gay attire and decked with costly ornaments, come out in procession to the pandal, where the Pushpini sings, with tom-toms and the firing of pop-guns at intervals. After three, five, or seven rounds of this, a cutting of the jasmine placed in a brass pot is carried on an elephant by the Elayad or family priest to the nearest Bhagavati temple, where it is planted on the night previous to the ceremonial day with tom-toms, fireworks, and joyous shouts of men and women. A few hours before the auspicious moment for the ceremony, this cutting is brought back. Before the tāli is tied, the girls are brought out of the room, and, either from the ground itself or from a raised platform, beautifully decorated with festoons, etc., are made to worship the sun. The bridegroom, a Tirumulpād or an enangan, is then brought into the house with sword in hand, with tom-toms, firing of pop-guns, and shouts of joy. At the gate he is received by a few female members with ashtamangalyam in their hands, and seated on a bench or

stool in the pandal. A male member of the family, generally a brother or maternal uncle of the girl, washes the feet of the bridegroom. The girls are covered with new cloths of cotton or silk, and brought into the pandal, and seated screened off from one another. After the distribution of money presents to the Brāhmans and the Elayad, the latter hands over the tāli, or thin plate of gold shaped like the leaf of aswatha (*Ficus religiosa*), and tacked on to a string, to the Tirumulpād, who ties it round the neck of the girl. A single Tirumulpād often ties the tāli round the neck of two, three, or four girls. He is given one to eight rupees per girl for so doing. Sometimes the tāli is tied by the mother of the girl. The retention of the tāli is not at all obligatory, nay it is seldom worn or taken care of after the ceremony. These circumstances clearly show the purely ceremonial character of this form of marriage. The Karamel Asan, or headman of the village, is an important factor on this occasion. In a conspicuous part of the marriage pandal, he is provided with a seat on a cot, on which a grass mat, a black blanket, and white cloth are spread one over the other. Before the tāli is tied, his permission is solicited for the performance of the ceremony. He is paid 4, 8, 16, 32 or 64 puthans (a puthan = 10 pies) per girl, according to the means of the family. He is also given rice, curry stuff, and pān-supāri. Rose-water is sprinkled at intervals on the males and females assembled on the occasion. With the distribution of pān-supāri, scented sandal paste and jasmine flowers to the females of the village and wives of relatives and friends, who are invited for the occasion, these guests return to their homes. The male members, one or two from each family in the village, are then treated to a sumptuous feast. In some places, where the Enangu

system prevails, all members of such families, both male and female, are also provided with meals. On the third day, the villagers are again entertained to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding, and on the fourth day the girls are taken out in procession for worship at the nearest temple amidst tom-toms and shouting. After this a feast is held, at which friends, relatives, and villagers are given a rich meal. With the usual distribution of pān-supāri, sandal and flowers, the invited guests depart. Presents, chiefly in money, are made to the eldest male member of the family by friends and relatives and villagers, and with this the ceremony closes. From the time of fixing the first pole for the pandal to the tying of the tāli, the village astrologer is in attendance on all ceremonial occasions, as he has to pronounce the auspicious moment for the performance of each item. During the four days of the marriage, entertainments, such as Kathakali drama or Ottan Tullal, are very common. When a family can ill-afford to celebrate the ceremony on any grand scale, the girls are taken to the nearest temple, or to the illam of a Nambūdri, if they happen to belong to sub-divisions attached to illams, and the tāli is tied with little or no feasting and merriment. In the northern taluks, the very poor people sometimes tie the tāli before the Trikkakkarappan on the Tiruvonam day."

An interesting account of the tāli-kettu ceremony is given by Duarte Barbosa, who writes as follows.* "After they are ten or twelve years old or more, their mothers perform a marriage ceremony for them in this manner. They advise the relations and friends that they may come to do honour to their daughters, and they

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* *Op. cit.*

beg some of their relations and friends to marry these daughters, and they do so. It must be said that they have some gold jewel made, which will contain half a ducat of gold, a little shorter than the tag of lace, with a hole in the middle passing through it, and they string it on a thread of white silk; and the mother of the girl stands with her daughter very much dressed out, and entertaining her with music and singing, and a number of people. And this relation or friend of hers comes with much earnestness, and there performs the ceremony of marriage, as though he married her, and they throw a gold chain round the necks of both of them together, and he puts the above mentioned jewel round her neck, which she always has to wear as a sign that she may now do what she pleases. And the bridegroom leaves her and goes away without touching her nor more to say to her on account of being her relation; and, if he is not so, he may remain with her if he wish it, but he is not bound to do so if he do not desire it. And from that time forward the mother goes begging some young men to deflower the girl, for among themselves they hold it an unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women."

The tāli-kettu ceremony is referred to by Kerr, who, in his translation of Castaneda, states that "these sisters of the Zamorin, and other kings of Malabar, have handsome allowances to live upon; and, when any of them reaches the age of ten, their kindred send for a young man of the Nāyar caste out of the kingdom, and give him presents to induce him to initiate the young virgin; after which he hangs a jewel round her neck, which she wears all the rest of her life, as a token that she is now at liberty to dispose of herself to anyone she pleases as long as she lives."

The opinion was expressed by Mr. (now Sir Henry) Winterbotham, one of the Malabar Marriage Commissioners, that the Brahman tāli-tier was a relic of the time when the Nambūtiris were entitled to the first fruits, and it was considered the high privilege of every Nāyar maid to be introduced by them to womanhood. In this connection, reference may be made to Hamilton's 'New Account of the East Indies', where it is stated that "when the Zamorin marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambūdri, or chief priest, has enjoyed her, and he, if he pleases, may have three nights of her company, because the first fruits of her nuptials must be an holy oblation to the god she worships. And some of the nobles are so complaisant as to allow the clergy the same tribute, but the common people cannot have that compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the priests' places themselves."

Of those who gave evidence before the Malabar Commission, some thought the tāli-kettu was a marriage, some not. Others called it a mock marriage, a formal marriage, a sham marriage, a fictitious marriage, a marriage sacrament, the preliminary part of marriage, a meaningless ceremony, an empty form, a ridiculous farce, an incongruous custom, a waste of money, and a device for becoming involved in debt. "While," the report states, "a small minority of strict conservatives still maintain that the tāli-kettu is a real marriage intended to confer on the bridegroom a right to cohabit with the bride, an immense majority describe it as a fictitious marriage, the origin of which they are at a loss to explain. And another large section tender the explanation accepted by our President (Sir T. Muttusami Aiyar) that, in some way or other, it is an essential caste observance preliminary to the forming of sexual relations."

In a recent note, Mr. K. Kannan Nāyar writes * : "Almost every Nāyar officer in Government employ, when applying for leave on account of the kettukalliānam of his daughter or niece, states in his application that he has to attend to the 'marriage' of the girl. The ceremony is generally mentioned as marriage even in the letters of invitation sent by Nāyar gentlemen in these days. . . . This ceremony is not intended even for the betrothal of the girl to a particular man, but is one instituted under Brāhman influence as an important kriya (sacrament) antecedent to marriage, and intended, as the popular saying indicates, for dubbing the girl with the status of Amma, a woman fit to be married. The saying is Tāli-kettiu Amma āyi, which means a woman has become an Amma when her tali-tying ceremony is over."

In summing up the evidence collected by him, Mr. L. Moore states † that it seems to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that "from the sixteenth century at all events, and up to the early portion of the nineteenth century, the relations between the sexes in families governed by marumakkattayam were of as loose a description as it is possible to imagine. The tāli-kettu kalyānam, introduced by the Brāhmans, brought about no improvement, and indeed in all probability made matters much worse by giving a quasi-religious sanction to a fictitious marriage, which bears an unpleasant resemblance to the sham marriage ceremonies performed among certain inferior castes elsewhere as a cloak for prostitution. As years passed, some time about the opening of the nineteenth century, the Kērala Mahatmyam and Keralolpathi were concocted, probably by Nambūdris, and false and pernicious doctrines as to the obligations laid on the

* Malabar Quart. Review, VII, 3, 1908.   † *Op. cit.*

Nāyars by divine law to administer to the lust of the Nambūdris were disseminated abroad. The better classes among the Nāyars revolted against the degrading custom thus established, and a custom sprang up, especially in North Malabar, of making sambandham a more or less formal contract, approved and sanctioned by the karnavan (senior male) of the tarwad to which the lady belonged, and celebrated with elaborate ceremony under the pudamuri form. That there was nothing analogous to the pudamuri prevalent in Malabar from A.D. 1550 to 1800 may, I think, be fairly presumed from the absence of all allusion to it in the works of the various European writers." According to Act IV, Madras, 1896, sambandham means an alliance between a man and a woman, by reason of which they in accordance with the custom of the community to which they belong, or either of them belongs, cohabit or intend to cohabit as husband and wife.

Of sambandham the following account was given by Mr. Chandu Menon to the Malabar Marriage Commission. "The variations of the sambandham are the pudamuri, vastradānam, uzhamporukkuka, vitāram kayaruka, etc., which are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would be hardly a Malaiyāli who would not readily understand what is meant by sambandham tudanguga (to begin sambandham). The meaning of this phrase, which means to 'marry,' is understood throughout Kēralam in the same way, and there can be no ambiguity or mistake about it. It is thus found that sambandham is the principal word denoting marriage among marumakkatāyam Nāyars. [Sambandhakāran is now the common term for husband.] It will also be found, on a close and careful examination of facts, that the principal features of this

sambandham ceremony all over Kēralam are in the main the same. As there are different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom to ascertain whether their stars agree astrologically; the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony; the usual hour at which the ceremony takes place; the presentation of dānam (gifts) to Brāhmans; sumptuous banquet; the meeting of the bride and bridegroom, are features which are invariably found in all well-conducted sambandhams in all parts of Kēralam alike. But here I would state that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to are gone through at all sambandhams among respectable Nāyars; and I would further state that they ought to be gone through at every sambandham, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of the sambandham, and also the particular incidents attached to certain forms of sambandham in South Malabar. I shall describe the pudamuri or vastradānam as celebrated in North Malabar, and then show how the other forms of sambandham differ from it. Of all the forms of sambandham, I consider the pudamuri the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. The preliminary ceremony in every pudamuri is the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride, in the presence of the relations of the bride and bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down

the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf, with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan (palm leaf), one of which is handed over to the bride's Karanavan, and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the former also receives presents in the shape of money or cloth. This preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed at all pudamuris in North Malabar, is called pudamuri kurikkal, but is unknown in South Malabar. Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the pudamuri, the bridegroom visits his Karanavans and elders in caste, to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house by the bride's party, and conducted with his friends to seats provided in the tekkini or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom distributes presents (dānam) or money gifts to the Brāhmans assembled. After this, the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the padinhatta or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths, and betel leaves and nuts. The

cloths are placed in the western room of the house (padinhatta), in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion. There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and ashtamangalyam, which consists of eight articles symbolical of mangalyam or marriage. These are rice, paddy (unhusked rice), the tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking-glass, a well-washed cloth, burning fire, and a small round box called cheppu. These will be found placed on the floor of the room as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his groomsman enters the room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloths and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east, with the ashtamangalyam and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groomsman then hands over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done, the elderly lady who accompanied the bride sprinkles rice over the lamps and the head and shoulders of the bride and bridegroom, who immediately leaves the room, as he has to perform another duty. At the tekkini or southern hall, he now presents his elders and friends with cakes, and betel leaf and nuts. Betel and nuts are also given to all the persons assembled at the place. After the departure of the guests, the bridegroom retires to the bed-room with the bride. Next morning, the vettilakettu or salkāram ceremony follows, and the bridegroom's female relations take the bride to the husband's house, where there is feasting in honour of the occasion. Uzhamporukkuka or vīdāram kayaral is a peculiar form

of marriage in North Malabar. It will be seen from the description given above that the pudamuri is necessarily a costly ceremony, and many people resort to the less costly ceremony of uzhamporukkuka or vīdāram kayaral. The features of this ceremony are to a certain extent the same as pudamuri, but it is celebrated on a smaller scale. There is no cloth-giving ceremony. The feasting is confined to the relations of the couple. The particular incident of this form of marriage is that the husband should visit the wife in her house, and is not permitted to take her to his house, unless and until he celebrates the regular pudamuri ceremony. This rule is strictly adhered to in North Malabar, and instances in which the husband and wife joined by the uzhamporukkuka ceremony, and with grown-up children as the issue of such marriage, undergo the pudamuri ceremony some fifteen or twenty years after uzhamporukkuka, in order to enable the husband to take the wife to his house, are known to me personally. The sambandham of South Malabar, and the kidakkora kalyānam of Palghat have all or most of the incidents of pudamuri, except the presenting of cloths. Here money is substituted for cloths, and the other ceremonies are more or less the same. There is also salkāram ceremony wanting in South Malabar, as the wives are not at once taken to the husband's house after marriage."

In connection with the following note by Mr. C. P. Rāman Menon on sambandham among the Akattu Charna or Akathithaparisha (inside clan), Mr. Fawcett states that "my informant says in the first place that the man should not enter into sambandham with a woman until he is thirty. Now-a-days, when change is running wild, the man is often much less. In North Malabar, which is much more conservative than the south, it was,

however, my experience that sambandham was rare on the side of the man before twenty-seven." "The Karanavan," Mr. Rāman Menon writes, "and the women of his household choose the bride, and communicate their choice to the intending bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are informally consulted, and, if they agree, the astrologer is sent for, and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place, two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and, when on the point of leaving, they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have sambandham with . . . . . (naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony. The proposal is accepted with pleasure, and the party from the bridegroom's house returns home. Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride, as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for the evening, and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same age as the bridegroom are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M., and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the taravad), areca nuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's household, and which are distributed to the guests. When the bride's house is far away, the bridegroom makes his procession thither from a neighbouring house. Arrived at the bride's house, they sit awhile, and are again

served with food, after which they are conducted to a room, where betel and other chewing stuff is placed on brass or silver plates called thālam. The chewing over, sweetmeats are served, and then all go to the bridal chamber, where the women of the house and others are assembled with the bride, who, overcome with shyness, hides herself behind the others. Here again the bridegroom and his party go through more chewing, while they chat with the women. After a while the men withdraw, wishing the couple all happiness, and then the women, departing one by one, leave the couple alone, one of them shutting the door from the outside. The Pattar Brāhmans always collect on these occasions, and receive small presents (dakshina) of two to four annas each, with betel leaves and areca nuts from the bridegroom, and sometimes from the bride. A few who are invited receive their dakshina in the bridal chamber, the others outside. Those of the bridegroom's party who live far away are given sleeping accommodation at the bride's house [in a Nāyar house the sleeping rooms of the men and women are at different ends of the house]. About daybreak next morning the bridegroom leaves the house with his party, leaving under his pillow 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees, according to his means, which are intended to cover the expenses of the wife's household in connection with the ceremony. The sambandham is now complete. The girl remains in her own taravad house, and her husband visits her there, coming in the evening and leaving next morning. A few days after the completion of the ceremony, the senior woman of the bridegroom's house sends some cloths, including pavu mundu (superior cloths) and thorthu mundu (towels), and some oil to the bride for her use for six months. Every six months she does the same, and, at the Ōnam,

Vishu, and Thiruvathīra festivals, she sends besides a little money, areca nuts, betel and tobacco. The money sent should be 4, 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees. Higher sums are very rarely sent. Before long, the women of the husband's house express a longing for the girl-wife to be brought to their house, for they have not seen her yet. Again the astrologer is requisitioned, and, on the day he fixes, two or three of the women go to the house of the girl, or, as they call her, Ammāyi (uncle's wife). They are well treated, and presently bring away the girl with them. As she is about to enter the gate-house of her husband's taravad, the stile of which she crosses right leg first, two or three of the women meet her, bearing a burning lamp and a brass plate (thālam), and precede her to the nalukattu of the house. There she is seated on a mat, and a burning lamp, a nazhi (measure) of rice, and some plantains are placed before her. One of the younger women takes up a plantain, and puts a piece of it in the Ammāyi's mouth; a little ceremony called madhuram tītal, or giving the sweets for eating. She lives in her husband's house for a few days, and is then sent back to her own with presents, bracelets, rings or cloths, which are gifts of the senior woman of the house. After this she is at liberty to visit her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious. In a big taravad, where there are many women, the Ammāyi does not, as a rule, get much sympathy and good-will in the household, and, if she happens to live temporarily in her husband's house, as is sometimes, though very rarely the case in South Malabar, and to be the wife of the Karanavan, it is observed that she gets more than her share of whatever good things may be going. Hence the proverb, 'Place Ammāyi Amma on a stone, and grind her with another stone.' A sambandham ceremony at

Calicut is recorded by Mr. Fawcett, at which there were cake and wine for the guests, and a ring for the bride.

In connection with sambandham, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes from Travancore that "it is known in different localities as gunadosham (union through good or evil), vastradānam or putavakota (giving of cloth), and uzhamporukkal (waiting one's turn). It may be performed without any formal ceremony whatever, and is actually a private transaction confidentially gone through in some families. The bridegroom and his friends assemble at the house of the bride on the appointed night, and, before the assembled guests, the bridegroom presents the bride with a few unbleached cloths. Custom enjoins that four pieces of cloth should be presented, and the occasion is availed of to present cloths to the relatives and servants of the bride also. The girl asks permission of her mother and maternal uncle, before she receives the cloths. After supper, and the distribution of pān-supāri, the party disperses. Another day is fixed for the consummation ceremony. On that day the bridegroom, accompanied by a few friends, goes to the bride's house with betel leaves and nuts. After a feast, the friends retire."

It is noted in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that one name for the sambandham rite is kitakkora, meaning bed-chamber ceremony. In the same report, the following account of a puberty ceremony is given. "The tirandukuli ceremony is practically a public declaration that a girl has reached the age of maturity. When a girl attains puberty, she is seated in a separate room, where a lamp is lit, and a brass pot with a bunch of cocoanut flowers is kept. She has to keep with her a circular plate of brass called vālkannādi, literally a looking-glass with a handle. The event is proclaimed by korava

(shouts of joy by females). The females of the neighbouring houses, and of the families of friends and relatives, visit her. New cloths are presented to the girl by her near relatives. On the third day the villagers, friends and relatives are treated to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding. Early in the morning on the fourth day, the Mannans or Vēlans appear. The girl is anointed with oil, and tender leaves of the cocoanut palm are tied round the head and waist. In the company of maidens she is brought out of the room, and the Vēlans sing certain songs. Thence the party move on to the tank, where the girl wears a cloth washed by a Vēlan, and takes a bath. After the bath the Vēlans again sing songs. In the afternoon, the girl is taken out by the females invited for the occasion to an ornamental pandal, and the Vēlans, standing at a distance, once more sing. With the usual distribution of pān-supāri, sandal and jasmine flowers, the ceremony closes. In the midst of the song, the female guests of the village, the wives of friends and relatives, and most of the members of the family itself, present each a small cloth to the Vēlans. They are also given a small amount of money, rice, betel leaf, etc. The guests are then entertained at a feast. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate house for the bath on the fourth day, whence she returns to her house in procession, accompanied by tom-toms and shouting. In the northern tāluks, the Vēlan's song is in the night, and the performance of the ceremony on the fourth day is compulsory. In the southern tāluks, it is often put off to some convenient day. Before the completion of this song ceremony, the girl is prohibited from going out of the house or entering temples."

It is provided, by the Malabar Marriage Act, 1896, that, "when a sambandham has been registered in the manner

therein laid down, it shall have the incidence of a legal marriage; that is to say, the wife and children shall be entitled to maintenance by the husband or father, respectively, and to succeed to half his self-acquired property, if he dies intestate; while the parties to such a sambandham cannot register a second sambandham during its continuance, that is, until it is terminated by death or by a formal application for divorce in the Civil Courts. The total number of sambandhams registered under the Act has, however, been infinitesimal, and the reason for this is, admittedly, the reluctance of the men to fetter their liberty to terminate sambandham at will by such restrictions as the necessity for formal divorce, or to undertake the burdensome responsibility of a legal obligation to maintain their wife and offspring. If, as the evidence recorded by the Malabar Marriage Commission tended to show, 'a marriage law in North Malabar, and throughout the greater part of South Malabar, would merely legalise what is the prevailing custom,' it is hard to see why there has been such a disinclination to lend to that custom the dignity of legal sanction." * The following applications to register sambandhams under the Act were received from 1897 to 1904:—

—	Nāyars.	Tiyans.	Others.	Total.
1897	28	6	2	36
1898	8	2	4	14
1899	8	2	4	14
1900	8	..	9	17
1901	3	...	1	4
1902	...	...	...	...
1903	2	...	...	2
Total ...	57	10	20	87

* Gazetteer of Malabar.

In a recent account of a Nāyar wedding in high life in Travancore, the host is said to have distributed flowers, attar, etc., to all his Hindu guests, while the European, Eurasian, and other Christian guests, partook of cake and wine, and other refreshments, in a separate tent. The Chief Secretary to Government proposed the toast of the bride and bridegroom.

The following note on Nāyar pregnancy ceremonies was supplied to Mr. Fawcett by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nāyar. "A woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh month, she (at least among the well-to-do classes) bathes, and worships in the temple every morning, and eats before her morning meal a small quantity of butter, over which mantrams (consecrated formulæ) have been said by the temple priest, or by Nambūtiris. This is generally done till delivery. Another, and even more important ceremony, is the puli-kuti (drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day and hour are fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins with the planting of a twig of the ampasham tree on the morning of the day of the ceremony in the principal courtyard (natu-muttam) of the taravād. At the appointed hour or muhūrtam, the pregnant woman, after having bathed, and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (vatakini or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastward. The ammayi, or uncle's wife, whose presence on the occasion is necessary, goes to the courtyard, and, plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his

right ring finger. Holding a country knife (pissan kathi) in his left hand, which he directs towards the mouth, he pours the tamarind juice over the knife with his right hand three times, and it dribbles down the knife into the woman's mouth, and she drinks it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates. After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, the woman is asked to pick out one of several packets of different grains placed before her. The grain in the packet she happens to select is supposed to declare the sex of the child in her womb. The ceremony winds up with a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and friends of the family." In connection with pregnancy ceremonies, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the puli-kuti ceremony is performed at the seventh, or sometimes the ninth month. The husband has to contribute the rice, cocoanut, and plantains, and present seven vessels containing sweetmeats. In the absence of a brother, a Mārān pours the juice into the mouth of the woman." It is noted in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "the puli-kudi ceremony consists in administering to the woman with child a few pills of tamarind and other acid substances. The pills are placed at the end of a knife-blade, and pushed into the mouth of the woman by means of a gold ring. The ceremony, which in a way corresponds to the pumsavana of the Brāhmans, is performed either by a brother or uncle of the woman, and, in the absence of both, by the husband himself. Unlike Brāhmans, the ceremony is performed only at the time of the first pregnancy." In the eighth month, a ceremony, called garbha veli uzhiyal, is performed by the Kaniyan (astrologer) to remove the effects of the evil eye.

The ceremonies observed in connection with pregnancy are described as follows in the Gazetteer of

Malabar. "The first regular ceremony performed during pregnancy is known as pulikudi or drinking tamarind, which corresponds to the Pumsavanam of the Brāhmans. But there are other observances of less importance, which commonly, if not invariably, precede this, and may be considered as corresponding to the Garbharakshana (embryo or womb protection) ceremony sometimes performed by Brāhmans, though not one of the obligatory sacraments. Sometimes the pregnant woman is made to consume daily a little ghee (clarified butter), which has been consecrated by a Nambūdiri with appropriate mantrams. Sometimes exorcists of the lower castes, such as Pānans, are called in, and perform a ceremony called Balikkala, in which they draw magic patterns on the ground, into which the girl throws lighted wicks, and sing rude songs to avert from the unborn babe the unwelcome attentions of evil spirits, accompanying them on a small drum called tudi, or with bell-metal cymbals. The ceremony concludes with the sacrifice of a cock, if the woman is badly affected by the singing. The pulikudi is variously performed in the fifth, seventh, or ninth month. An auspicious hour has to be selected by the village astrologer for this as for most ceremonies. A branch of a tamarind tree should be plucked by the pregnant woman's brother, who should go to the tree with a kindi (bell-metal vessel) of water, followed by an Enangatti * carrying a hanging lamp with five wicks (tukkuvilakku), and, before plucking it, perform three pradakshinams round it. In the room in which the ceremony is to be

* An Enangan or Inangan is a man of the same caste and sub-division or marriage group. It is usually translated "kinsman," but is at once wider and narrower in its connotation. My Enangans are all who can marry the same people that I can. An Enangatti is a female member of an Enangan's family.

performed, usually the vadakkini, there is arranged a mat, the usual lamp (nilavilakku) with five wicks, and a para measure of rice (niracchaveppu), also the materials necessary for the performance of Ganapathi pūja (worship of the god Ganēsa), consisting of plantains, brown sugar, leaves of the sacred basil or tulasi (*Ocimum sanctum*), sandal paste, and the eight spices called ashtagantham. The woman's brother performs Ganapathi pūja, and then gives some of the tamarind leaves to the Enangatti, who expresses their juice, and mixes it with that of four other plants.* The mixture is boiled with a little rice, and the brother takes a little of it in a jack (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) leaf folded like a spoon, and lets it run down the blade of a knife into his sister's mouth. He does this three times. Then the mixture is administered in the same manner by some woman of the husband's family, and then by an Ammāyi (wife of one of the members of the girl's tarwad). The branch is then planted in the nadumittam, and feasting brings the ceremony to a close. The above description was obtained from an Urali Nāyar of Calicut taluk. In other localities and castes, the details vary considerably. Sometimes the mixture is simply poured into the woman's mouth, instead of being dripped off a knife. Some castes use a small spoon of gold or silver instead of the jack leaves. In South Malabar there is not as a rule any procession to the tamarind tree. Among Agathu Charna Nāyars of South Malabar, the ceremony takes place in the nadumittam, whither the tamarind branch is brought by a Tiyan. The girl carries a valkannadi or bell-metal mirror, a charakkōl or arrow, and a pisankatti (knife). An Enangatti pours some oil

* The aimpuli or "five tamarinds" are *Tamarindus indica*, *Garcinia Cambogia*, *Spondias mangifera*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, and *Hibiscus hirtus*.

on her head, and lets it trickle down two or three hairs to her navel, where it is caught in a plate. Then the girl and her brother, holding hands, dig a hole with the charakkōl and pisankatti, and plant the tamarind branch in the nadumittam, and water it. Then the juice is administered. Until she is confined, the girl waters the tamarind branch, and offers rice, flowers, and lighted wicks to it three times a day. When labour begins, she uproots the branch."

"At delivery," Mr. Balakrishnan Nāyar writes, "women of the barber caste officiate as midwives. In some localities, this is performed by Vēlan caste women. Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and every day the mother wears cloths washed and presented by a woman of the Vannān [or Tīyan] caste. On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a man of the Attikurissi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid mixture of oil and the five products of the cow (pānchagavya), with gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds. Then the woman takes a plunge-bath, and sits on the ground near the tank or river. Some woman of the family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water from the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's head as many as twenty-one times. This done, she again plunges in the water, from which she emerges thoroughly purified. It may be noted that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has also to undergo a rite of purification. It is placed on the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it, and takes it in his hands. The superstitious believe that the temperament of the child is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles the water. All the members of the taravād observe pollution for fifteen days following the delivery, during

which they are prohibited from entering temples and holy places." It is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar that the first act done, when a male child is born, is to beat the earth with a cocoanut leaf, and, if the issue is a female, to grind some turmeric in a mortar, with the object, it is said, of removing the child's fear.

In connection with post-natal ceremonies, Mr. Balakrishnan Nāyar writes further that "the twenty-seventh day after the child's birth, or the first recurring day of the star under which it was born, marks the next important event. On this day, the Karanavan of the family gives to the child a spoonful or two of milk mixed with sugar and slices of plantain. Then he names the child, and calls it in the ear by the name three times. This is followed by a feast to all friends and relatives, the expenses of which are met by the father of the child. With the Nāyar, every event is introduced by a ceremonial. The first meal of rice (chorūn) partaken of by the child forms no exception to the rule. It must be remembered that the child is not fed on rice for some time after birth, the practice being to give it flour of dried plantain boiled with jaggery (crude sugar). There is a particular variety of plantain, called kunnan, used for this purpose. Rice is given to the child for the first time generally during the sixth month. The astrologer fixes the day, and, at the auspicious hour, the child, bathed and adorned with ornaments (which it is the duty of the father to provide) is brought, and laid on a plank. A plantain leaf is spread in front of it, and a lighted brass lamp placed near. On the leaf are served a small quantity of cooked rice—generally a portion of the rice offered to some temple divinity—some tamarind, salt, chillies, and sugar. [In some places all the curries, etc., prepared for the attendant feast, are also served.]

Then the Karanavan, or the father, ceremoniously approaches, and sits down facing the child. First he puts in the mouth of the child a mixture of the tamarind, chillies and salt, then some rice, and lastly a little sugar. Thenceforward the ordinary food of the child is rice. It is usual on this occasion for relatives (and especially the bandhus, such as the ammayi, or 'uncle's wife') to adorn the child with gold bangles, rings and other ornaments. The rice-giving ceremony is, in some cases, preferably performed at some famous temple, that at Guruvayūr being a favourite one for this purpose." It is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar that the rice-giving ceremony is usually performed by taking the child to a neighbouring temple, and feeding it with the meal offered to the deity as nivadiyam. In some places, the child is named on the chorūn day.

Of ceremonies which take place in infancy and childhood, the following account is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "On the fifth day after birth, a woman of the Attikurissi or Mārayan caste among Nāyars, or of the barber caste in the lower classes, is called in, and purifies the mother, the other women of the household, and the room in which the child was born, by lustration with milk and gingelly oil, using karuga (*Cynodon Dactylon*) as a sprinkler. Her perquisites are the usual niracchaveppu (1 edangazhi of paddy and 1 nazhi of uncooked rice) placed together with a lamp of five wicks in the room to be cleansed, and a small sum in cash. A similar purification ceremony on the 15th day concludes the pollution period. In some cases, milk and cow's urine are sprinkled over the woman, and, after she has bathed, the Mārayan or Attikurissi waves over her and the child two vessels, one containing water stained red with turmeric and lime, and one water blackened with

powdered charcoal. During this and other periods, a characteristic service called māttu (change) has to be rendered by people of the Mannān caste to Nāyars, and to other castes by their proper washermen, who may or may not be Mannāns. On the day of birth, the Mannātti brings a clean tūni (cloth) of her own, and a mundu (cloth), which she places in the yard, in which she finds the accustomed perquisites of grain set out, and a lamp. An Attikurissi Nāyar woman takes the clean clothes, and the Mannātti removes those previously worn by the mother. Every subsequent day during the pollution period, the Mannātti brings a change of raiment, but it is only on the 7th and 15th days that any ceremonial is observed, and that the Attikurissi woman is required. On those days, a Mannān man attends with the Mannātti. He makes three pradakshinams round the clean clothes, the lamp, and the niracchaveppu, and scatters a little of the grain forming the latter on the ground near it, with an obeisance, before the Attikurissi woman takes the clothes indoors. This rite of māttu has far reaching importance. It affords a weapon, by means of which the local tyrant can readily coerce his neighbours, whom he can subject to the disabilities of excommunication by forbidding the washerman to render them this service; while it contributes in no small degree to the reluctance of Malayāli women to leave Kērala, since it is essential that the māttu should be furnished by the appropriate caste and no other.

"On the twenty-eighth day (including the day of birth) comes the Pālu-kudi (milk-drinking) ceremony, at which some women of the father's family must attend. Amongst castes in which the wife lives with the husband, the ceremony takes place in the husband's house, to which the wife and child return for the first time on this day. The usual lamp, niracchaveppu and kindi of water,

are set forth with a plate, if possible of silver, containing milk, honey, and bits of a sort of plantain called kunnan, together with three jack leaves folded to serve as spoons. The mother brings the child newly bathed, and places it in his Karnavan's lap. The goldsmith is in attendance with a string of five beads (mani or kuzhal) made of the panchaloham or five metals, gold, silver, iron, copper and lead, which the father ties round the baby's waist. The Karnavan, or the mother, then administers a spoonful of the contents of the plate to the child with each of the jack leaves in turn. The father's sister, or other female relative, also administers some, and the Karnavan then whispers the child's name thrice in its right ear.

"The name is not publicly announced till the Chōrunnu or Annaprāsanam (rice giving), which takes place generally in the sixth month, and must be performed at an auspicious moment prescribed by an astrologer. The paraphernalia required are, besides the five-wicked lamp, some plantain leaves on which are served rice and four kinds of curry called kalan, olan, avil, and ericchakari, some pappadams (wafers of flour and other ingredients), plantains and sweetmeats called uppēri (plantains fried in cocoanut oil). The mother brings the child newly bathed, and wearing a cloth for the first time, and places it in the Karnavan's lap. The father then ties round the child's neck a gold ring, known as muhurta mothiram (auspicious moment ring), and the relatives present give the child other ornaments of gold or silver according to their means, usually a nūl or neck-thread adorned with one or more pendants, an arannal or girdle, a pair of bangles, and a pair of anklets. The Karnavan then, after an oblation to Ganapathi, gives the child some of the curry, and whispers its name in its right ear three times. He then carries the child to a cocoanut tree

near the house, round which he makes three pradakshinams, pouring water from a kindi round the foot of the tree as he does so. The procession then returns to the house, and on the way an old woman of the family proclaims the baby's name aloud for the first time in the form of a question, asking it 'Krishnan' (for instance), 'dost thou see the sky?' In some cases, the father simply calls out the name twice.

"The Vidyarambham ceremony to celebrate the beginning of the child's education takes place in the fifth or seventh year. In some places, the child is first taken to the temple, where some water sanctified by mantrams is poured over his head by the Shāntikāran (officiating priest). The ceremony at the house is opened by Ganapathi pūja performed by an Ezhuttacchan, or by a Nambūdri, or another Nāyar. The Ezhuttacchan writes on the child's tongue with a gold fanam (coin) the invocation to Ganapathi (Hari Sri Ganapathayi nama), or sometimes the fifty-one letters of the Malayalam alphabet, and then grasps the middle finger of the child's right hand, and with it traces the same letters in parched rice. He also gives the child an ola (strip of palm leaf) inscribed with them, and receives in return a small fee in cash. Next the child thrice touches first the Ezhuttacchan's feet, and then his own forehead with his right hand, in token of that reverent submission to the teacher, which seems to have been the key-note of the old Hindu system of education.

"The Kāthukuttu or ear-boring is performed either at the same time as the Pāla-kudi or the Choulam, or at any time in the fifth or seventh year. The operator, who may be any one possessing the necessary skill, pierces first the right and then the left ear with two gold or silver wires brought by the goldsmith, or with karamullu

thorns. The wires or thorns are left in the ears. In the case of girls, the hole is subsequently gradually distended by the insertion of nine different kinds of thorns or plugs in succession, the last of which is a bamboo plug, till it is large enough to admit the characteristic Malayāli ear ornament, the boss-shaped toda."

Of the death ceremonies among the Nāyars of Malabar, the following detailed account is given by Mr. Fawcett. "When the dying person is about to embark for that bourne from which no traveller returns, and the breath is about to leave his body, the members of the household, and all friends who may be present, one by one, pour a little water, a few drops from a tiny cup made of a leaf or two of the tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), into his mouth, holding in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring, the idea being that the person should touch gold ere it enters the mouth of the person who is dying. If the taravād is rich enough to afford it, a small gold coin (a rāsi fanam, if one can be procured) is placed in the mouth, and the lips are closed. As soon as death has taken place, the corpse is removed from the cot or bed and carried to the vatakkini (a room in the northern end of the house), where it is placed on long plantain leaves spread out on the floor; and, while it is in the room, whether by day or night, a lamp is kept burning, and one member of the taravād holds the head in his lap, and another the feet in the same way; and here the neighbours come to take a farewell look at the dead. As the Malayālis believe that disposal of a corpse by cremation or burial as soon as possible after death is conducive to the happiness of the spirit of the departed, no time is lost in setting about the funeral. The bodies of senior members of the taravād, male or female, are burned, those of children under two are buried; so too are the bodies of all

persons who have died of cholera or small-pox. When preparations for the funeral have been made, the corpse is removed to the natumuttam or central yard of the house, if there is one (there always is in the larger houses); and, if there is not, is taken to the front yard, where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It is washed and anointed, the usual marks are made with sandal paste and ashes as in life, and it is neatly clothed. There is then done what is called the potavekkuka ceremony, or placing new cotton cloths (kōti mundu) over the corpse by the senior member of the deceased's taravād followed by all the other members, and also the sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and all relatives. These cloths are used for tying up the corpse, when being taken to the place of burial or cremation. In some parts of Malabar, the corpse is carried on a bier made of fresh bamboos, tied up in these cloths, while in others it is carried, well covered in the cloths, by hand. In either case it is carried by the relatives. Before the corpse is removed, there is done another ceremony called pāravirakkuka, or filling up pāras. (A pāra is a measure nearly as big as a gallon.) All adult male members of the taravād take part in it under the direction of a man of the Attikkurissi clan who occupies the position of director of the ceremonies during the next fifteen days, receiving as his perquisites all the rice and other offerings made to the deceased's spirit. It consists in filling up three pāra measures with paddy (unhusked rice), and one edangāli ($\frac{1}{10}$ of a pāra) with raw rice. These offerings of paddy and rice are placed very near the corpse, together with a burning lamp of the kind commonly used in Malabar, called nela vilaku. If the taravād is rich enough to afford one, a silk cloth is placed over the corpse before its removal for cremation.

As much fuel as is necessary having been got ready at the place of cremation, a small pit about the size of the corpse is dug, and across this are placed three long stumps of plantain tree, one at each end, and one in the middle, on which as a foundation the pyre is laid. The whole, or at least a part of the wood used, should be that of the mango tree. As the corpse is being removed to the pyre, the senior Anandravan * who is next in age (junior) to the deceased tears from one of the new cloths laid on the corpse a piece sufficient to go round his waist, ties it round his waist and holds in his hand, or tucks into his cloth at the waist, a piece of iron, generally a long key. This individual is throughout chief among the offerers of pindam (balls of rice) to the deceased. The corpse is laid on the bier with the head to the south, with the fuel laid over it, and a little camphor, sandal-wood and ghī (clarified butter), if these things are within the means of the taravād. Here must be stated the invariable rule that no member of the taravād, male or female, who is older than the deceased, shall take any part whatever in the ceremony, or in any subsequent ceremony following on the cremation or burial. All adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or, if there is none surviving, his nephew (his sister's eldest son) sets fire to the pyre at the head of the corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at the same time to the pyre at the feet of the corpse. In the case of the deceased being a woman, her son sets fire to the pyre ; failing a son, the next junior in age to her has the right to do it. It is a matter of greatest

* The eldest male member of the taravād is called the Karanavan. All male members, brothers, nephews, and so on, who are junior to him, are called Anandravans of the taravād.

importance that the whole pyre burns at once. The greatest care is taken that it burns as a whole, consuming every part of the corpse. While the corpse is being consumed, all the members of the deceased's taravād who carried it to the pyre go and bathe in a tank (there is always one in the compound or grounds round every Nāyar's house). The eldest, he who bears the piece of torn cloth and iron (the key), carries an earthen pot of water, and all return together to the place of cremation. It should be said that, on the news of a death, the neighbours assemble, assisting in digging the grave, preparing the pyre, and so on, and, while the members of the taravād go and bathe, they remain near the corpse. By the time the relatives return it is almost consumed by the fire, and the senior Anandravan carries the pot of water thrice round the pyre, letting the water leak out by making holes in the pot as he walks round. On completing the third round, he dashes the pot on the ground close by where the head of the dead body has been placed. A small image representing the deceased is then made out of raw rice, and to this image a few grains of rice and gingelly seeds are offered. When this has been done, the relatives go home and the neighbours depart, bathing before entering their houses. When the cremation has been done by night, the duty of sēshakriya (making offerings to the deceased's spirit) must be begun the next day between 10 and 11 A.M., and is done on seven consecutive days. In any case the time for this ceremony is after 10 and before 11, and it continues for seven days. It is performed as follows. All male members of the taravād younger than the deceased go together to a tank and bathe, *i.e.*, they souse themselves in the water, and return to the house. The eldest of them, the man who tore off the strip of cloth from

the corpse, has with him the same strip of cloth and the piece of iron, and all assemble in the central courtyard of the house, where there have been placed ready by an enangan some rice which has been half boiled, a few grains of gingelly, a few leaves of the cherūla (*Ærua lanata*), some curds, a smaller measure of paddy, and a smaller measure of raw rice. These are placed in the north-east corner with a lamp of the ordinary Malabar pattern. A piece of palmyra leaf, about a foot or so in length and the width of a finger, is taken, and one end of it is knotted. The knotted end is placed in the ground, and the long end is left sticking up. This represents the deceased. The rice and other things are offered to it. The belief concerning this piece of palmyra leaf is explained thus. There are in the human body ten humours:—Vāyūs, Prānan, Apānan, Samānan, Udānan, Vyānan, Nāgan, Kurman, Krikalan, Dēvadattan, Dhananjayan. These are called Dasavāyu, *i.e.*, ten airs. When cremation was done for the first time, all these, excepting the last, were destroyed by the fire. The last one flew up, and settled on a palmyra leaf. Its existence was discovered by some Brāhman sages, who, by means of mantrams, forced it down to a piece of palmyra leaf on the earth. So it is thought that, by making offerings to this Dhananjayan leaf for seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be mollified, should he have any anger to vent on the living members of the taravād. The place where the piece of leaf is to be fixed has been carefully cleaned, and the leaf is fixed in the centre of the prepared surface. The offerings made to it go direct to the spirit of the deceased, and the peace of the taravād is assured. The men who have bathed and returned have brought with them some grass (karuka pulla), plucked on their way back to the house.

They kneel in front of the piece of palmyra, with the right knee on the ground. Some of the grass is spread on the ground near the piece of leaf, and rings made with it are placed on the ring finger of the right hand by each one present. The first offerings consist of water, sandal paste, and leaves of the cherūla, the eldest of the Anandravans leading the way. Boys need not go through the actual performance of offerings; it suffices for them to touch the eldest as he is making the offerings. The half boiled rice is made into balls (pindam), and each one present takes one of these in his right hand, and places it on the grass near the piece of palmyra leaf. Some gingelly seeds are put into the curd, which is poured so as to make three rings round the pindams. It is poured out of a small cup made with the leaf on which the half-boiled rice had been placed. It should not be poured from any other kind of vessel. The whole is then covered with this same plantain leaf, a lighted wick is waved, and some milk is put under the leaf. It is undisturbed for some moments, and leaf is gently tapped with the back of the fingers of the right hand. The leaf is then removed, and torn in two at its midrib, one piece being placed on either side of the pindams. The ceremony is then over for the day. The performers rise, and remove the wet clothing they have been wearing. The eldest of the Anandravans should, it was omitted to mention, be kept somewhat separated from the other Anandravans while in the courtyard, and before the corpse is removed for cremation; a son-in-law or daughter-in-law, or some such kind of relation remaining, as it were, between him and them. He has had the piece of cloth torn from the covering of the corpse tied round his waist, and the piece of iron in the folds of his cloth, or stuck in his waist during the ceremony

which has just been described. Now, when it has been completed, he ties the piece of cloth to the pillar of the house nearest to the piece of palmyra leaf which has been stuck in the ground, and puts the piece of iron in a safe place. The piece of palmyra leaf is covered with a basket. It is uncovered every day for seven days at the same hour, while the same ceremony is repeated. The balls of rice are removed by women and girls of the taravād who are junior to the deceased. They place them in the bell-metal vessel in which the rice was boiled. The senior places the vessel on her head, and leads the way to a tank, on the bank of which the rice is thrown. It is hoped that crows will come and eat it; for, if they do, the impression is received that the deceased's spirit is pleased with the offering. But, if somehow it is thought that the crows will not come and eat it, the rice is thrown into the tank. Dogs are not to be allowed to eat it. The women bathe after the rice has been thrown away. When the ceremony which has been described has been performed for the seventh time, *i.e.*, on the seventh day after death, the piece of palmyra leaf is removed from the ground, and thrown on the ashes of the deceased at the place of cremation. During these seven days, no member of the taravād goes to any other house. The house of the dead, and all its inmates are under pollution. No outsider enters it but under ban of pollution, which is, however, removable by bathing. A visitor entering the house of the dead during these seven days must bathe before he can enter his own house. During these seven days, the Karanavan of the family receives visits of condolence from relatives and friends to whom he is "at home" on Monday, Wednesday or Saturday. They sit and chat, chew betel, and go home, bathing ere they enter their houses. It is said

that, in some parts of Malabar, the visitors bring with them small presents in money or kind to help the Karanavan through the expenditure to which the funeral rites necessarily put him. To hark back a little, it must not be omitted that, on the third day after the death, all those who are related by marriage to the taravād of the deceased combine, and give a good feast to the inmates of the house and to the neighbours who are invited, one man or woman from each house. The person so invited is expected to come. This feast is called patni karigi. On the seventh day, a return feast will be given by the taravād of the deceased to all relatives and neighbours. Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no ceremony is observed, but the members of the taravād remain under death pollution. On the fourteenth day comes the sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the calcined remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male members of the taravād go to the place of cremation, and, picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they find there, place these in an earthen pot which has been sun-dried (not burnt by fire in the usual way), cover up the mouth of this pot with a piece of new cloth, and, all following the eldest who carries it, proceed to the nearest river (it must be running water), which receives the remains of the dead. The men then bathe, and return home. In some parts of Malabar the bones are collected on the seventh day, but it is not orthodox to do so. Better by far than taking the remains to the nearest river is it to take them to some specially sacred place, Benares, Gaya, Ramēswaram, or even to some place of sanctity much nearer home, as to Tirunelli in Wynaad, and there dispose of them in the same manner. The bones or ashes of any one having been taken to Gaya and there deposited in the river, the survivors of the taravād have

no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. This is called ashtagaya srādh. It puts an end to the need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that the collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important, the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living members of the taravād, cause miscarriage to the women, possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on. On the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory ceremony. Until this has been done, any one touched by any member of the taravād should bathe before he enters his house, or partakes of any food. A man of the Athikurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil, in which some gingelly seeds have been put, over the persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling, and the bath which follows it, remove the death pollution. The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his offices on this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the taravād. In the case of death of a senior member of a taravād, well-to-do and recognised as of some importance, there is the feast called pinda atiyantaram on the sixteenth day after death, given to the neighbours and friends. With the observance of this feast of pindams there is involved the dīksha, or leaving the entire body unshaved for forty-one days, or for a year. There is no variable limit between forty-one days or a year. The forty-one-day period is the rule in North Malabar. I have seen many who were under the dīksha for a year. He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew of the deceased. One member only of the taravād bears the mark of mourning by his growth of hair. He who is under the dīksha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly seeds to the spirits of the deceased every morning after his bath, and he is under restriction from women, from

alcoholic drinks, and from chewing betel, also from tobacco. When the dīksha is observed, the ashes of the dead are not deposited as described already (in the sun-dried vessel) until its last day—the forty-first or a year after death. When it is carried on for a year, there is observed every month a ceremony called bali. It is noteworthy that, in this monthly ceremony and for the conclusion of the dīksha, it is not the thirtieth or three hundred and sixty-fifth day which marks the date for the ceremonies, but it is the day (of the month) of the star which was presiding when the deceased met his death: the returning day on which the star presides.* For the bali, a man of the Elayatu caste officiates. The Elayatus are priests for the Nāyars. They wear the Brāhmin's thread, but they are not Brāhmins. They are not permitted to study the Vēdas, but to the Nāyars they stand in the place of the ordinary purōhit. The officiating Elayatu prepares the rice for the bali, when to the deceased, represented by karuka grass, are offered boiled rice, curds, gingelly seeds, and some other things. The Elayatu should be paid a rupee for his services, which are considered necessary even when the man under dīksha is himself familiar with the required ceremonial. The last day of the dīksha is one of festivity. After the bali, the man under dīksha is shaved. All this over, the only thing to be done for the deceased is the annual srādh or yearly funeral commemorative rite. Rice-balls are made, and given to crows. Clapping of hands announces to these birds that the rice is being thrown for them, and, should they not come at once and eat, it is evident that the spirit is displeased, and the taravād had better look out. The spirits of those who

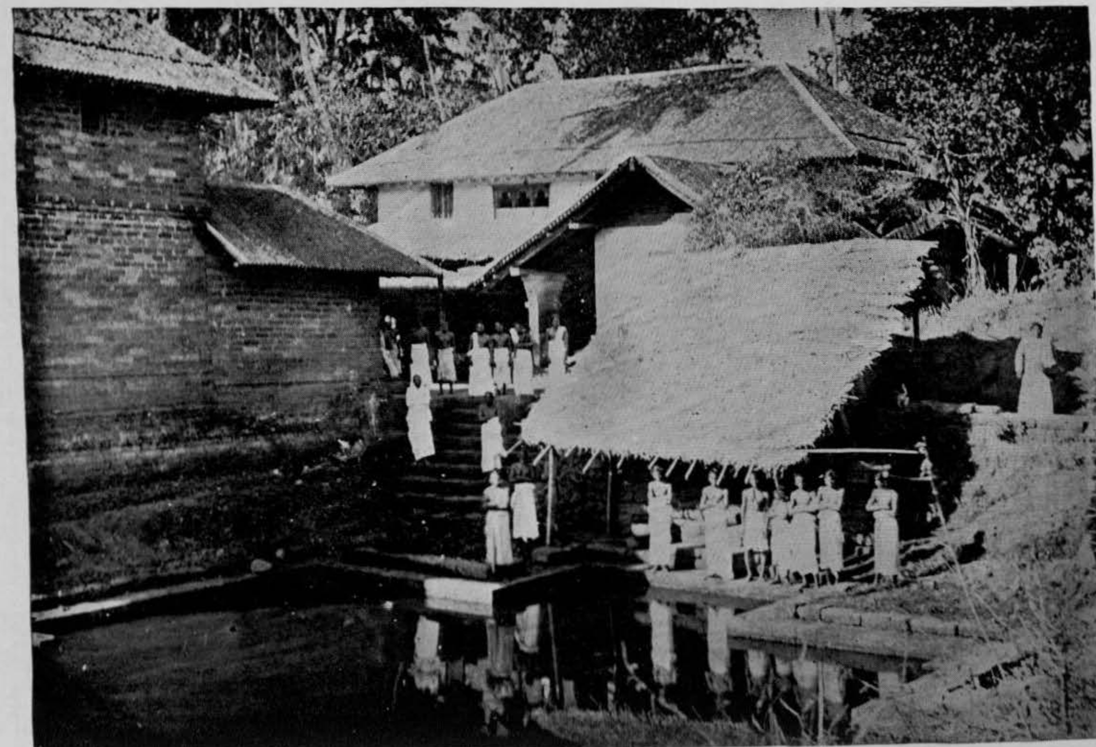
* All caste Hindus who perform the srādh ceremonies calculate the day of death, not by the day of the month, but by the thithis (day after full or new moon).

have committed suicide, or met death by any violent means, are always particularly vicious and troublesome to the taravād, their spirits possessing and rendering miserable some unfortunate member of it. Unless they are pacified, they will ruin the taravād, so Brāhman priests are called in, and appease them by means of tilahōmam, a rite in which sacrificial fire is raised, and ghī, gingelly, and other things are offered through it."

"There are," Mr. Fawcett writes, "many interesting features in the death ceremonies as performed by the Kiriattil class. Those who carry the corpse to the pyre are dressed as women, their cloths being wet, and each carries a knife on his person. Two junior male members of the taravād thrust pieces of mango wood into the southern end of the burning pyre, and, when they are lighted, throw them over their shoulders to the southwards without looking round. Close to the northern end of the pyre, two small sticks are fixed in the ground, and tied together with a cloth, over which water is poured thrice. All members of the taravād prostrate to the ground before the pyre. They follow the enangu carrying the pot of water round the pyre, and go home without looking round. They pass to the northern side of the house under an arch made by two men standing east and west, holding at arms length, and touching at the points, the spade that was used to dig the pit under the pyre, and the axe with which the wood for the pyre was cut or felled. After this is done the kodali ceremony, using the spade, axe, and big knife. These are placed on the leaves where the corpse had lain. Then follows circumambulation and prostration by all, and the leaves are committed to the burning pyre."

In connection with the death ceremonies, it is noted in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "the last

moments of a dying person are really very trying. All members (male and female), junior to the dying person, pour into his or her mouth drops of Ganges or other holy water or conjee (rice) water in token of their last tribute of regard. Before the person breathes his last, he or she is removed to the bare floor, as it is considered sacrilegious to allow the last breath to escape while lying on the bed, and in a room with a ceiling, which last is supposed to obstruct the free passage of the breath. The names of gods, or sacred texts are loudly dinned into his or her ears, so that the person may quit this world with the recollections of God serving as a passport to heaven. The forehead, breast, and the joints especially are besmeared with holy ashes, so as to prevent the messengers of death from tightly tying those parts when they carry away the person. Soon after the last breath, the dead body is removed to some open place in the house, covered from top to toe with a washed cloth, and deposited on the bare floor with the head towards the south, the region of the God of death. A lighted lamp is placed near the head, and other lights are placed all round the corpse. A mango tree is cut, or other firewood is collected, and a funeral pyre is constructed in the south-eastern corner of a compound or garden known as the corner of Agni, which is always reserved as a cemetery for the burning or burial of the dead. All male members, generally junior, bathe, and, without wiping their head or body, they remove the corpse to the yard in front of the house, and place it on a plantain leaf. It is nominally anointed with oil, and bathed in water. Ashes and sandal are again smeared on the forehead and joints. The old cloth is removed, and the body is covered with a new unwashed cloth or a piece of silk. A little gold or silver, or small coins are put into the

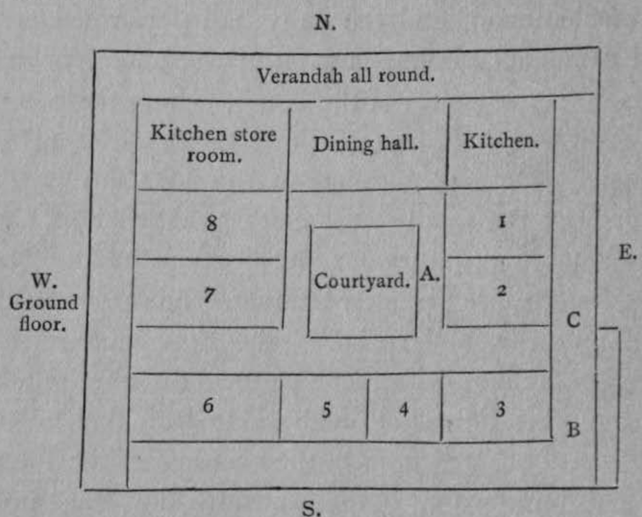


NĀYAR HOUSE.

mouth. With the breaking of a cocoanut, and the offering of some powdered rice, betel leaf, areca nut, etc., the body is taken to the pyre. The members junior to the deceased go round the pyre three, five, or seven times, throw paddy and rice over the dead body, put scantlings of sandal wood, prostrate at the feet of the corpse, and then set fire to the pyre. When the body is almost wholly consumed, one of the male members carries a pot of water, and, after making three rounds, the pot is broken and thrown into the pyre. The death of an elderly male member of a family is marked by udakakriya and sanchayanam, and the daily bali performed at the bali kutti (altar) planted in front of the house, or in the courtyard in the centre of the house, where there is one. The Ashtikurissi Nāyar officiates as priest at all such obsequies. On the morning of the fifteenth day, the members of the family wear cloths washed by a Vēlan, and assemble together for purification by the Nāyar priest, both before and after bathing, who throws on them paddy and rice, and sprinkles the holy mixture. The Elayad or family purōhit then performs another punnayaham or purification, and on the sixteenth day he takes the place of the priest. On the evening of the fifteenth day, and the morning of the sixteenth day, the purōhits and villagers are sumptuously feasted, and presents of cloths and money are made to the Elayads. In the Chittūr tāluk, the Tamil Brāhman sometimes performs priestly functions in place of the Elayad. Dīksha is performed for forty-one days, or for a whole year, for the benefit of the departed soul. This last ceremony is invariably performed on the death of the mother, maternal uncle, and elder brother."

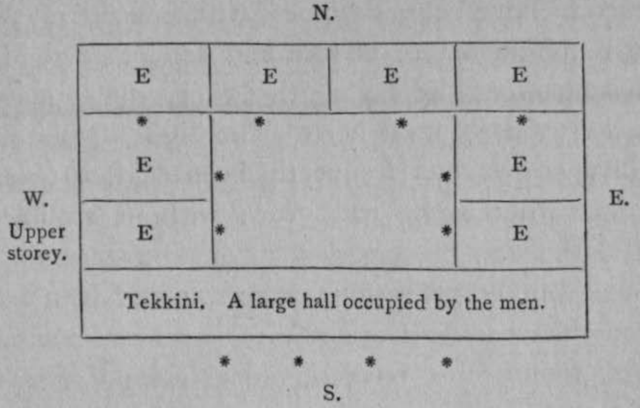
In connection with the habitations of the Nāyars, Mr. Fawcett writes as follows. "A house may face east or

west, never north or south; as a rule, it faces the east. Every garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, in the case of the poorest houses, a small portico or open doorway roofed over. One never walks straight through this; there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the Nāyars. The following is a plan of a nālapura or four-sided house, which may be taken as representative of the houses of the rich:—

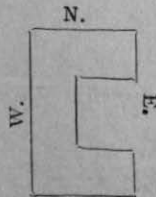


Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms, which are generally used for storing grain. At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper storey occupied by the female members of the family. At B is another staircase leading to the rooms of the upper storey occupied by the male members. There is no connection between the portions allotted to the men and women. No. 8 is for the family gods. The Karanavans and old women of the family are perpetuated in images of gold or silver, or, more commonly, brass. Poor people, who cannot

afford to have these images made, substitute a stone. Offerings are made to these images, or to the stones at every full moon. The throat of a fowl will be cut outside, and the bird is then taken inside and offered. The entrance is at C.



There are windows at * * *. E are rooms occupied by women and children. It may be noticed that the apartment where the men sleep has no windows on the side of the house which is occupied by women. The latter are relatively free from control by the men as to who may visit them. We saw, when speaking of funeral ceremonies, that a house is supposed to have a courtyard, and, of course, it has this only when there are four sides to the house. The nālapura is the proper form of house, for in this alone can all ceremonial be observed in orthodox fashion. But it is not the ordinary Nāyar's house that one sees all over Malabar.



The ordinary house is roughly of the shape here indicated. Invariably there is an upper storey. There are no doors, and only a few tiny windows opening to the west. Men sleep at one end, women at the other, each having their own staircase. Around the house there is

always shade from the many trees and palms. Every house is in its own seclusion."

Concerning Nāyar dwellings, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the houses of the Nāyar, standing in a separate compound, have been by many writers supposed to have been designed with special reference to the requirements of offence and defence, and Major Welsh states that the saying that every man's house is his castle is well verified here. The higher ambition of the Nāyar is, as has frequently been said, to possess a garden, wherein he can grow, without trouble or expense, the few necessaries of his existence. The garden surrounding the house is surrounded by a hedge or strong fence. At the entrance is an out-house, or patipura, which must have served as a kind of guard-room in mediæval times. In poorer houses its place is taken by a roofed door, generally provided with a stile to keep out cattle. The courtyard is washed with cow-dung, and diverse figures are drawn with white chalk on the fence. Usually there are three out-houses, a vadakkettu on the north side serving as a kitchen, a cattle-shed, and a tekketu on the southern side, where some family spirit is located. These are generally those of Maruta, *i.e.*, some member of the family who has died of small-pox. A sword or other weapon, and a seat or other emblem is located within this out-house, which is also known by the names of gurusala (the house of a saint), kalari (military training-ground), and daivappura (house of a deity). The tekketu is lighted up every evening, and periodical offerings are made to propitiate the deities enshrined within. In the south-west corner is the serpent kavu (grove), and by its side a tank for bathing purposes. Various useful trees are grown in the garden, such as the jack, areca palm, cocoanut, plantain,

tamarind, and mango. The whole house is known as vitu. The houses are built on various models, such as pattayappura, nālukettu, ettukettu, and kuttikettu."

Concerning the dress of the Nāyars, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the males dress themselves in a mundu (cloth), a loose lower garment, and a towel. A neriyatu, or light cloth of fine texture with coloured border, is sometimes worn round the mundu on festive occasions. Coats and caps are recent introductions, but are eschewed by the orthodox as unnational. It is noted by Mr. Logan that 'the women clothe themselves in a single white cloth of fine texture, reaching from the waist to the knees, and occasionally, when abroad, they throw over the shoulder and bosom another similar cloth. But by custom the Nāyar women go uncovered from the waist. Upper garments indicate lower caste, or sometimes, by a strange reversal of Western notions, immodesty.' Edward Ives, who came to Anjengo about 1740, observes that 'the groves on each bank of the river are chiefly planted with cocoanut trees, and have been inhabited by men and women in almost a pure state of nature, for they go with their breasts and bellies entirely naked. This custom prevails universally throughout every caste from the poorest planter of rice to the daughter or consort of the king upon the throne.'" [According to ancient custom, Nāyar women in Travancore used to remove their body-cloth in the presence of the Royal Family. But, since 1856, this custom has been abolished, by a proclamation during the reign of H.H. Vanchi Bala Rāma Varma Kulasakhara Perumal Bhagiodya Rāma Varma. In a critique on the Indian Census Report, 1901, Mr. J. D. Rees observes * that

* Nineteenth Century, 1904.

"if the Census Commissioner had enjoyed the privilege of living among the Nāyars, he would not have accused them of an 'excess of females.' The most beautiful women in India, if numerous, could never be excessive." Concerning Nāyar females, Pierre Loti writes* that "les femmes ont presque toutes les traits d'une finesse particulière. Elles se font des bandeaux a la Vierge, et, avec le reste de leurs cheveux, très noirs et très lisses, composent une espèce de galette ronde qui se porte au sommet de la tête, en avant et de côté, retombant un peu vers le front comme une petite toque cavalièrement posée, en contraste sur l'ensemble de leur personne qui demeure toujours grave et hiératique."] The Nāyars are particularly cleanly. Buchanan writes that "the higher ranks of the people of Malayala use very little clothing, but are remarkably clean in their persons. Cutaneous disorders are never observed except among slaves and the lowest orders, and the Nāyar women are remarkably careful, repeatedly washing with various saponaceous plants to keep their hair and skins from every impurity." The washerman is constantly in requisition. No dirty cloths are ever worn. When going for temple worship, the Nāyar women dress themselves in the tattu form by drawing the right corner of the hind fold of the cloth between the thighs, and fastening it at the back. The cloth is about ten cubits long and three broad, and worn in two folds. The oldest ornament of the Nāyar women is the necklace called nāgapatam, the pendants of which resemble a cobra's hood. The Nāyar women wear no ornament on the head, but decorate the hair with flowers. The nāgapatam, and several other forms of neck ornament, such as kazhultila, nalupanti, puttali,

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* L'Inde (sans les Anglais).

chelakkamotiram, amatāli, arumpumani, and kumilatāli are fast vanishing. The kuttu-minnu is worn on the neck for the first time by a girl when her tāli-kettu is celebrated. This ornament is also called gnali. Prior to the tāli-kettu ceremony, the girls wear a kāsu or sovereign. The inseparable neck ornament of a Nāyar woman in modern days is the addiyal, to which a patakkam is attached. The only ornament for the ears is the takka or toda. After the lobes have been dilated at the karnavedha ceremony, and dilated, a big leaden ring is inserted in them. The nose ornament of women is called mukkuthi, from which is suspended a gold wire called gnattu. No ornament is worn in the right nostril. The wearing of gold bangles on the wrists has been long the fashion among South Indian Hindu females of almost all high castes. Round the waist Nāyar women wear chains of gold and silver, and, by the wealthy, gold belts called kachchapuram are worn. Anklets were not worn in former times, but at the present day the kolusu and padasaram of the Tamilians have been adopted. So, too, the time-honoured toda is sometimes set aside in favour of the Tamil kammal, an ornament of much smaller size. Canter Visscher (who was Chaplain at Cochin in the eighteenth century) must have been much struck by the expenditure of the Nāyar women on their dress, for he wrote * 'there is not one of any fortune who does not own as many as twenty or thirty chests full of robes made of silver and other valuable materials, for it would be a disgrace in their case to wear the same dress two or three days in succession'."

It is noted by Mr. Fawcett that "the Venetian sequin, which probably first found its way to Malabar in the days

* Letters from Malabar.

of Vasco da Gama and Albuquerque, is one of those coins which, having found favour with a people, is used persistently in ornamentation long after it has passed out of currency. So fond are the Malayālis of the sequin that to this day there is quite a large trade in imitations of the coin for purposes of ornament. Such is the persistence of its use that the trade extends to brass and even copper imitation of the sequins. The former are often seen to bear the legend 'Made in Austria.' The Nāyars wear none but the gold sequins. The brass imitations are worn by the women of the inferior races. If one asks the ordinary Malayāli, say a Nāyar, what persons are represented on the sequin, one gets for answer that they are Rāma and Sīta ; between them a cocoanut tree."

In connection with the wearing of charms by Nāyars Mr. Fawcett writes as follows. "One individual (a Kiriattil Nāyar) wore two rings made of an amalgamation of gold and copper, called tambāk, on the ring finger of the right hand for good luck. Tambāk rings are lucky rings. It is a good thing to wash the face with the hand, on which is a tambāk ring. Another wore two rings of the pattern called trilōham (lit. metals) on the ring finger of each hand. Each of these was made during an eclipse. Yet another wore a silver ring as a vow, which was to be given up at the next festival at Kottiūr, a famous festival in North Malabar. The right nostril of a Sūdra Nāyar was slit vertically as if for the insertion of a jewel. His mother miscarried in her first pregnancy, so, according to custom, he, the child of her second pregnancy, had his nose slit. Another wore a silver bangle. He had a wound in his arm which was long in healing, so he made a vow to the god at Tirupati (in the North Arcot district), that, if his arm was healed, he would give up the bangle at the Tirupati temple. He intended to send the

bangle there by a messenger. An Akattu Charna Nāyar wore an amulet to keep off the spirit of a Brāhman who died by drowning. Another had a silver ring, on which a piece of a bristle from an elephant's tail was arranged."

Tattooing is said by Mr. Subramani Aiyar not to be favoured by North Travancore Nāyars, and to be only practiced by Nāyar women living to the south of Quilon. Certain accounts trace it to the invasion of Travancore by a Moghul Sirdar in 1680 A.D. In modern times it has become rare. The operation is performed by women of the Odda or Kurava caste before a girl reaches the twelfth year.

Concerning the religious worship of the Nāyars, Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes that "Buchanan notes that the proper deity of the Nāyars is Vishnu, though they wear the mark of Siva on their foreheads. By this is merely meant that they pay equal reverence to both Siva and Vishnu, being Smartas converted to the tenets of Sankaracharya. Besides worshipping the higher Hindu deities, the Nāyars also manifest their adoration for several minor ones, such as Mātan, Utayam, Yakshi, Chattan, Chantakarnan, Murti, Maruta, and Arukula. Most of these have granite representations, or at least such emblems as a sword or a cane, and are provided with a local habitation. Besides these, persons who have met with accidental death, and girls who have died before their tāli-tying ceremony, are specially worshipped under the designations of Kazhichchavu and Kannichchavu. Magicians are held in some fear, and talismanic amulets are attached to the waist by members of both sexes. Kuttichattan, the mischievous imp of Malabar, is supposed to cause much misery. Various spirits are worshipped on the Tiruvonam day in the month of Avani (August-September), on the Uchcharam or 28th

day of Makarom (January-February), and on some Tuesdays and Fridays. Kolam-tullal, Velan-pravarti, Ayiramaniyam-tullel, Chavuttu, Tila-homam, and a host of other ceremonies are performed with a view to propitiate spirits, and the assistance of the Kaniyans and Vēlans is largely sought. Serpents, too, whose images are located on the north-western side of most gardens in Central and North Travancore, receive a large share of adoration. The sun is an object of universal worship. Though the Gayatri cannot be studied, or the Sandhyavandanam of the Brāhmans performed, an offering of water to the sun after a bath, to the accompaniment of some hymn, is made by almost every pious Nāyar. The Panchakshara is learnt from an Ilayatu, and repeated daily. A large portion of the time of an old Nāyar is spent in reading the Rāmayana, Bhagavata and Mahābharata, rendered into Malayālam by Tunchattu Ezhuttachhan, the greatest poet of the Malabar coast. Many places in Travancore are pointed out as the scene of memorable incidents in the Rāmayana and Mahābharata. There are many temples, tanks, and mountains connected with Rāma's march to the capital of Rāvana. Equally important are the singular feats said to have been performed by the five Pāndavas during the time of their wanderings in the jungles before the battle of Kurukshetra. Bhima especially has built temples, raised up huge mountains, and performed many other gigantic tasks in the country. There are some village temples owned exclusively by the Nāyars, where all the karakkars (villagers) assemble on special occasions. A very peculiar socio-religious ceremony performed here is the kūttam. This is a village council, held at the beginning of every month for the administration of the communal affairs of the caste, though, at

the present day, a sumptuous feast at the cost of each villager in rotation, and partaken of by all assembled, and a small offering to the temple, are all that remains to commemorate it. Astrology is believed in, and some of its votaries are spoken of as Trikalagnas, or those who know the past, present, and future. It is due to a curse of Siva on the science of his son, who made bold by its means to predict even the future of his father, that occasional mistakes are said to occur in astrological calculations. Sorcery and witchcraft are believed to be potent powers for evil. To make a person imbecile, to paralyse his limbs, to cause him to lavish all his wealth upon another, to make him deaf and dumb, and, if need be, even to make an end of him, are not supposed to be beyond the powers of the ordinary wizard. Next to wizardry and astrology, palmistry, omens, and the lizard science are generally believed in. In the category of good omens are placed the elephant, a pot full of water, sweetmeats, fruit, fish and flesh, images of gods, kings, a cow with its calf, married women, tied bullocks, gold lamps, ghee, milk, and so on. Under the head of bad omens come the donkey, a broom, buffalo, untied bullock, barber, widow, patient, cat, washerman, etc. The worst of all omens is beyond question to allow a cat to cross one's path. An odd number of Nāyars, and an even number of Brāhmans, are good omens, the reverse being particularly bad. On the Vinayaka-chaturthi day in the month of Avani, no man is permitted to look at the rising moon under penalty of incurring unmerited obloquy.

"The chief religious festival of the Nāyars is Ōnam, which takes place in the last week of August, or first week of September. It is a time of rejoicing and merriment. Father Paulinus, writing in the latter half of the

eighteenth century, observes that about the tenth of September the rain ceases in Malabar. All nature seems then as if renovated; the flowers again shoot up, and the trees bloom. In a word, this season is the same as that which Europeans call spring. The Ōnam festival is said, therefore, to have been instituted for the purpose of soliciting from the gods a happy and fruitful year. It continues for eight days, and during that time the Indians are accustomed to adorn their houses with flowers, and to daub them over with cow-dung, because the cow is a sacred animal, dedicated to the Goddess Lakshmi, the Ceres of India. On this occasion they also put on new clothes, throw away all their old earthenware, and replace it by new. Ōnam is, according to some, the annual celebration of the Malabar new year, which first began with Cheraman Perumal's departure for Mecca. But, with the majority of orthodox Hindus, it is the day of the annual visit of Mahabali to his country, which he used to govern so wisely and well before his overthrow. There is also a belief that it is Maha-Vishnu who, on Ōnam day, pays a visit to this mundane universe, for the just and proper maintenance of which he is specially responsible. In some North Malabar title-deeds and horoscopes, Mr. Logan says, the year is taken as ending with the day previous to Ōnam. This fact, he notes, is quite reconcileable with the other explanation, which alleges that the commencement of the era coincides with Perumal's departure for Arabia, if it is assumed, as is not improbable, that the day on which he sailed was Thiruvōnam day, on which acknowledgment of fealty should have been made. Ōnam, it may be observed, is a contraction of Thiruvōnam which is the asterism of the second day of the festival. Throughout the festival, boys from five to fifteen years of age go out

early in the morning to gather flowers, of which the kadali is the most important. On their return, they sit in front of the tulasi (sacred basil) mandapam, make a carpet-like bed of the blossoms which they have collected, and place a clay image of Ganapati in the centre. A writer in the Calcutta Review * describes how having set out at dawn to gather blossoms, the children return with their beautiful spoils by 9 or 10 A.M., and then the daily decoration begins. The chief decoration consists of a carpet made out of the gathered blossoms, the smaller ones being used in their entirety, while the large flowers, and one or two varieties of foliage of different tints, are pinched up into little pieces to serve the decorator's purpose. This flower carpet is invariably made in the centre of the clean strip of yard in front of the neat house. Often it is a beautiful work of art, accomplished with a delicate touch and a highly artistic sense of tone and blending. The carpet completed, a miniature pandal (booth), hung with little festoons, is erected over it, and at all hours of the day neighbours look in, to admire and criticise the beautiful handiwork."

"Various field sports, of which foot-ball is the chief, are indulged in during the Ōnam festival. To quote Paulinus once more, the men, particularly those who are young, form themselves into parties, and shoot at each other with arrows. These arrows are blunted, but exceedingly strong, and are discharged with such force that a considerable number are generally wounded on both sides. These games have a great likeness to the Ceralia and Juvenalia of the ancient Greeks and Romans."

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* January, 1899.

In connection with bows and arrows, Mr. Fawcett writes that "I once witnessed a very interesting game called ēitū (ēiththu), played by the Nāyars in the southern portion of Kurumbranād during the ten days preceding Ōnam. There is a semi-circular stop-butt, about two feet in the highest part, the centre, and sloping to the ground at each side. The players stand 25 to 30 yards before the concave side of it, one side of the players to the right, the other to the left. There is no restriction of numbers as to sides. Each player is armed with a little bow made of bamboo, about 18 inches in length, and arrows, or what answer for arrows, these being no more than pieces of the midrib of the cocoanut palm leaf, roughly broken off, leaving a little bit of the end to take the place of the feather. In the centre of the stop-butt, on the ground, is placed the target, a piece of the heart of the plantain tree, about 3 inches in diameter, pointed at the top, in which is stuck a small stick convenient for lifting the cheppu, as the mark which is the immediate objective of the players is called. They shoot indiscriminately at the mark, and he who hits it (the little arrows shoot straight, and stick in readily) carries off all the arrows lying on the ground. Each side strives to secure all the arrows, and to deprive the other side of theirs—a sort of 'beggar my neighbour.' He who hits the mark last takes all the arrows; that is, he who hits it, and runs and touches the mark before any one else hits it. As I stood watching, it happened several times that as many as four arrows hit the mark, while the youth who had hit first was running the 25 yards to touch the cheppu. Before he could touch it, as many as four other arrows had struck it, and, of course, he who hit it last and touched the mark secured all the arrows for his side. The game is accompanied by much

shouting, gesticulation and laughter. Those returning, after securing a large number of arrows, turned somersaults, and expressed their joy in saltatory motions." In a note on this game with bows and arrows in Kurumbranad, Mr. E. F. Thomas writes that "the players form themselves into two sides, which shoot alternately at the mark. Beside the mark stand representatives of the two sides. When the mark is hit by a member of either side, on his representative shouting 'Run, man,' he runs up the lists. His object is to seize the mark before it is hit by any one belonging to the other side. If he can do this, his side takes all the arrows which have been shot, and are sticking in the stop-butt. If, on the other hand, the mark is hit by the other side before he reaches it, he may not seize the mark. A member of the other side runs up in his turn to seize the mark if possible before it is hit again by the first side. If he can do this, he takes out, not all the arrows, but only the two which are sticking in the mark. If, while number two is running, the mark is hit a third time, a member of the first side runs up, to seize the mark if possible. The rule is that one or three hits take all the arrows in the stop-butt, two or four only the arrows sticking in the mark. Great excitement is shown by all who take part in the game, which attracts a number of spectators. The game is played every fortnight by Nāyars, Tiyans, Māppillas, and others. I am told that it is a very old one, and is dying out. I saw it at Naduvanūr."

The Ōnam games in the south-east of Malabar, in the neighbourhood of Palghat, are said by Mr. Fawcett to be of a rough character, "the tenants of certain jenmis (landlords) turning out each under their own leader, and engaging in sham fights, in which there is much rough play. Here, too, is to be seen a kind of boxing, which

would seem to be a relic of the days of the Roman pugiles using the cestus in combat. The position taken up by the combatants is much the same as that of the pugiles. The Romans were familiar with Malabar from about 30 B.C. to the decline of their power.* We may safely assume that the 3,000 lbs. of pepper, which Alaric demanded as part of the ransom of Rome when he besieged the city in the fifth century, came from Malabar." Swinging on the uzhinjal, and dancing to the accompaniment of merry songs, are said to be characteristic amusements of the womankind during Ōnam festival, and, on the Patinaram Makam, or sixteenth day after Thiruvonam. This amusement is indulged in by both sexes. It is noted by Mr. Fawcett that "the cloths given as Ōnam presents are yellow, or some part of them is yellow. There must be at least a yellow stripe or a small patch of yellow in a corner, which suggests a relic of sun-worship in a form more pronounced than that which obtains at present. It is a harvest festival, about the time when the first crop of paddy (rice) is harvested."

Concerning another important festival in Malabar, the Thiruvathira, Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar writes as follows.† "Thiruvathira is one of the three great national occasions of Malabar. It generally comes off in the Malayālam month of Dhanu (December or January) on the day called the Thiruvathira day. It is essentially a festival in which females are almost exclusively concerned, and lasts for but a single day. The popular conception of it is that it is in commemoration of the death of Kāmadēvan, the Cupid of our national mythology. As recorded in the old Purānas, Kāmadēvan

* See Thurston. Catalogue of Roman, etc., Coins, Madras Government Museum, 2nd ed., 1894.

† Malabar and its Folk, 1900.



BHAGAVATI TEMPLE, PANDALŪR.

was destroyed in the burning fire of the third eye of Siva, one of the chief members of our divine Trinity. Hence he is now supposed to have only an ideal or rather spiritual existence, and thus he exerts a powerful influence upon the lower passions of human nature. The memory of this unhappy tragedy is still kept alive among us, particularly the female section, by means of the annual celebration of this important festival. About a week before the day, the festival practically opens. At about four in the morning, every young female of Nair families with pretensions to decency gets out of bed, and takes her bath in a tank. Usually a fairly large number of these young ladies collect at the tank for the purpose. Then all, or almost all of them, plunge in the water, and begin to take part in the singing that is presently to follow. One of them then leads off by means of a peculiar rhythmic song, chiefly pertaining to Cupid. This singing is simultaneously accompanied by a curious sound produced with her hand on the water. The palm of the left hand is closed, and kept immediately underneath the surface of the water. Then the palm of the other is forcibly brought down in a slanting direction, and struck against its surface, so that the water is completely ruffled, and is splashed in all directions, producing a loud deep noise. This process is continuously prolonged, together with the singing. One stanza is now over along with the sound, and then the leader stops awhile for the others to follow in her wake. This being likewise over, she caps her first stanza with another, at the same time beating on the water, and so on until the conclusion of the song. All of them make a long pause, and then begin another. The process goes on until the peep of dawn, when they rub themselves dry, and come home to dress

themselves in the neatest and grandest possible attire. They also darken the fringes of their eyelids with a sticky preparation of soot mixed up with a little oil or ghee, and sometimes with a superficial coating of antimony powder. They also wear white, black, or red marks down the middle of their foreheads. They also chew betel, and thus redden their mouths and lips. They then proceed to the enjoyment of another prominent item of pleasure, viz., swinging to and fro on what is usually known as an uzhinjal, or swing made of bamboo. On the festival day, after the morning bath is over, they take a light meal, and in the noon the family dinner is voraciously attacked, the essential and almost universal ingredients being ordinary ripe plantain fruits, and a delicious preparation of arrowroot powder purified and mixed with jaggery (crude sugar) or sugar, and also cocoanut. Then, till evening, dancing and merry-making are ceaselessly indulged in. The husband population are inexcusably required to be present in the wives' houses before evening, as they are bound to do on the Ōnam and Vishu occasions. Failure to do this is looked upon as a step, or rather the first step, on the part of the defaulting husband towards a final separation or divorce from the wife. Despite the rigour of the bleak December season during which the festival commonly falls, heightened inevitably by the constant blowing of the cold east wind upon their moistened frames, these lusty maidens derive considerable pleasure from their early baths, and their frolics in the water. The biting cold of the season, which makes their persons shiver and quiver, becomes to them in the midst of all their ecstatic frolics an additional source of pleasure. The two items described above, viz., the swinging and beating of the water, have each their own distinctive

significance. The former typifies the attempt which these maidens make in order to hang themselves on these instruments, and destroy their lives in consequence of the lamented demise of their sexual deity Kāmadēvan. The beating on the water symbolises their beating their chests in expression of their deep-felt sorrow caused by their Cupid's death."

Yet another important festival, Vishu, is thus described by Mr. Gopal Panikkar. "Vishu, like the Ōnam and Thiruvathira festivals, is a remarkable event among us. Its duration is limited to one day. The 1st of Mētam (some day in April) is the unchangeable day, on which it falls. It is practically the astronomical new year's day. This was one of the periods when, in olden days, the subjects of ruling princes or authorities in Malabar, under whom their lots were cast, were expected to bring their new year's offerings to such princes. Failure to comply with the customary and time-consecrated demands was visited with royal displeasure, resulting in manifold varieties of oppression. The British Government, finding this was a great burden, pressing rather heavily upon the people, obtained as far back as 1790 a binding promise from those Native Princes that such exactions of presents from the people should be discontinued thereafter. Consequently the festival is now shorn of much of its ancient sanctity and splendour. But suggestive survivals of the same are still to be found in the presents, which tenants and dependents bring to leading families on the day previous to the Vishu. Being the commencement of a new year, native superstition surrounds it with a peculiar solemn importance. It is believed that a man's whole prosperity in life depends upon the nature, auspicious or otherwise, of the first things that he happens to fix his eyes upon

on this particular morning. According to Nair, and even general Hindu mythology, there are certain objects which possess an inherent inauspicious character. For instance, ashes, firewood, oil, and a lot of similar objects are inauspicious ones, which will render him who chances to notice them first fare badly in life for the whole year, and their obnoxious effects will be removed only on his seeing holy things, such as reigning princes, oxen, cows, gold, and such like, on the morning of the next new year. The effects of the sight of these various materials are said to apply even to the attainment of objects by a man starting on a special errand, who happens for the first time to look at them after starting. However, with this view, almost every family religiously takes care to prepare the most sightworthy objects on the new year morning. Therefore, on the previous night they prepare what is known as a kani. A small circular bell-metal vessel is taken, and some holy objects are systematically arranged inside it. A grandha or old book made of palmyra leaves, a gold ornament, a new-washed cloth, some 'unprofitably gay' flowers of the konna tree (*Cassia Fistula*), a measure of rice, a so-called looking-glass made of bell-metal, and a few other things, are all tastefully arranged in the vessel, and placed in a prominent room inside the house. On either side of this vessel two brass or bell-metal lamps, filled with cocoanut oil clear as diamond sparks, are kept burning, and a small plank of wood, or some other seat, is placed in front of it. At about 5 o'clock in the morning of the day, some one who has got up first wakes up the inmates, both male and female, of the house, and takes them blindfolded, so that they may not gaze at anything else, to the seat near the kani. The members are seated, one after another, in the seat, and

are then, and not till then, asked to open their eyes, and carefully look at the kani. Then each is made to look at some venerable member of the house, or sometimes a stranger even. This over, the little playful urchins of the house begin to fire small crackers, which they have bought and stored for the occasion. The kani is then taken round the place from house to house for the benefit of the poor families, which cannot afford to prepare such a costly adornment. With the close of the noise of the crackers, the morning breaks, and preparations are begun for the morning meal. This meal is in some parts confined to rice kanji (gruel) with a grand appendage of other eatable substances, and in others to ordinary rice and its accompaniments, but in either case on a grand scale. Immediately the day dawns, the heads of the families give to almost all the junior members and servants of the household, and to wives and children, money presents to serve as their pocket-money. In the more numerically large families, similar presents are also made by the heads of particular branches of the same family to their juniors, children, wives and servants. One other item connected with the festival deserves mention. On the evening of the previous day, about four or five o'clock, most well-to-do families distribute paddy or rice, as the case may be, in varying quantities, and some other accessories to the family workmen, whether they live on the family estates or not. In return for this, these labourers bring with them for presentation the fruits of their own labours, such as vegetables of divers sorts, cocoanut oil, jaggery, plantains, pumpkins, cucumbers, brinjals (fruit of *Solanum Melongena*), etc., according as their respective circumstances permit. With the close of the midday meal the festival practically concludes. In some families, after

the meal is over, dancing and games of various kinds are carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of the pleasantries incidental to the festival. As on other prominent occasions, card-playing and other games are also resorted to."

On the subject of religion, Mr. Fawcett writes as follows. "No Nāyar, unless one utterly degraded by the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It is a rule seldom broken that every Nāyar goes to the temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed; generally twice a day. The mere approach anywhere near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Pulayan, or any inferior being, even a Tiyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with sandal-wood paste, is pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he can enter his house and eat. Buchanan tells us that in his time, about a century ago, the man of inferior caste thus approaching a Nāyar would be cut down instantly with a sword; there would be no words. Now that the people of India are inconvenienced with an Arms Act which inhibits sword play of this kind, and with a law system under which high and low are rated alike, the Nāyar has to content himself with an imperious grunt-like shout for the way to be cleared for him as he stalks on imperturbed. His arrogance is not diminished, but he cannot now show it in quite the same way.

"I will attempt a description of the ceremonial observed at the Pishāri kāvu—the Pishāri temple near Quilandy on the coast 15 miles north of Calicut, where Bhagavati is supposed in vague legend to have slain an Āsura or gigantic ogre, in commemoration of which

event the festival is held yearly to Bhagavati and her followers. The festival lasts for seven days. When I visited it in 1895, the last day was on the 31st of March. Before daybreak of the first day, the ordinary temple priest, a Mūssad, will leave the temple after having swept it and made it clean; and (also before daybreak) five Nambūtiris will enter it, bearing with them sudhi kalasam. The kalasam is on this occasion made of the five products of the cow (panchagavyam), together with some water, a few leaves of the banyan tree, and darbha grass, all in one vessel. Before being brought to the temple, mantrams or magic verses will have been said over it. The contents of the vessel are sprinkled all about the temple, and a little is put in the well, thus purifying the temple and the well. The Nambūtiris will then perform the usual morning worship, and, either immediately after it or very soon afterwards, they leave the temple, and the Mūssad returns and resumes his office. The temple belongs to four taravāds, and no sooner has it been purified than the Kāranavans of these four taravāds, virtually the joint-owners of the temple (known as Urālas) present to the temple servant (Pishārodi) the silver flag of the temple, which has been in the custody of one of them since the last festival. The Pishārodi receives it, and hoists it in front of the temple (to the east), thus signifying that the festival has begun. While this is being done, emphasis and grandeur is given to the occasion by the firing off of miniature mortars such as are common at all South Indian festivals. After the flag is hoisted, there are hoisted all round the temple small flags of coloured cloth. For the next few days there is nothing particular to be done beyond the procession morning, noon, and night; the image of Bhagavati being carried on an elephant to an orchestra

of drums, and cannonade of the little mortars. All those who are present are supposed to be fed from the temple. There is a large crowd. On the morning of the fifth day, a man of the washerman (Vannān) caste will announce to the neighbours by beat of tom-tom that there will be a procession of Bhagavati issuing from the gates of the temple, and passing round about. Like all those who are in any way connected with the temple, this man's office is hereditary, and he lives to a small extent on the bounty of the temple, *i.e.*, he holds a little land on nominal terms from the temple property, in consideration for which he must fulfil certain requirements for the temple, as on occasions of festivals. His office also invests him with certain rights in the community. In the afternoon of the fifth day, the Vannān and a Manūtan, the one following the other, bring two umbrellas to the temple; the former bringing one of cloth, and the latter one of cadjan (palm leaves). I am not sure whether the cloth umbrella has been in the possession of the Vannān, but think it has. At all events, when he brings it to the temple, it is in thorough repair—a condition for which he is responsible. The cadjan umbrella is a new one. Following these two as they walk solemnly, each with his umbrella, is a large crowd. There are processions of Bhagavati on the elephant encircling the temple thrice in the morning, at noon, and at night. Early on the sixth day, the headman of the Mukkuvans (fishermen), who by virtue of his headship is called the Arayan, together with the blacksmith and the goldsmith, comes to the temple followed by a crowd, but accompanied by no orchestra of drums. To the Arayan is given half a sack of rice for himself and his followers. A silver umbrella belonging to the temple is handed over to him, to be used when



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he comes to the temple again in the evening. To the blacksmith is given the temple sword. The goldsmith receives the silver umbrella from the Arayan, and executes any repairs that may be needful, and, in like manner, the blacksmith looks to the sword. In the afternoon, the headman of the Tiyans, called the Tandān, comes to the temple followed by two of his castemen carrying slung on a pole over their shoulders three bunches of young cocoanuts—an appropriate offering, the Tiyans being those whose ordinary profession is climbing the cocoanut palm, drawing the toddy, securing the cocoanuts, etc. This time there will be loud drumming, and a large crowd with the Tandān, and in front of him are men dancing, imitating sword play with sticks and shields, clanging the shields, pulling at bows as if firing off imaginary arrows, the while shouting and yelling madly. Then come the blacksmith and the goldsmith with the sword. Following comes the Arayan with the silver umbrella to the accompaniment of very noisy drumming, in great state under a canopy of red cloth held lengthways by two men, one before, the other behind. The procession of Bhagavati continues throughout the night, and ceases at daybreak. These six days of the festival are called Vilākku. A word about the drumming. The number of instrumentalists increases as the festival goes on, and on the last day I counted fifty, all Nāyars. The instruments were the ordinary tom-tom, a skin stretched tight over one side of a circular wooden band, about 1½ feet in diameter and 2 or 3 inches in width, and the common long drum much narrower at the ends than in the middle; and there were (I think) a few of those narrow in the middle, something like an hourglass cut short at both ends. They are beaten with curved drum-sticks, thicker at the end held in the hand.

The accuracy with which they were played on, never a wrong note although the rhythm was changed perpetually, was truly amazing. And the crescendo and diminuendo, from a perfect fury of wildness to the gentlest pianissimo, was equally astonishing, especially when we consider the fact that there was no visible leader of this strange orchestra. Early on the seventh and last day, when the morning procession is over, there comes to the temple a man of the Pānan caste (umbrella-makers and devil-dancers). He carries a small cadjan umbrella which he has made himself, adorned all round the edges with a fringe of the young leaves of the cocoanut palm. His approach is heralded and noised just as in the case of the others on the previous day. The umbrella should have a long handle, and, with it in his hand, he performs a dance before the temple. The temple is situated within a hollow square enclosure, which none in caste below the Nāyar is permitted to enter. To the north, south, east, and west, there is a level entrance into the hollow square, and beyond this entrance no man of inferior caste may go. The Pānan receives about 10 lbs. of raw rice for his performance. In the afternoon, a small crowd of Vettuvars come to the temple, carrying with them swords, and about ten small baskets made of cocoanut palm leaves, containing salt. These baskets are carried slung on a pole. The use of salt here is obscure.* I remember a case of a Nāyar's house having been plundered, the idol knocked down, and salt put in the place where it should have stood. The act was looked on as most insulting. The Vettuvans dance and shout in much excitement, cutting their heads with their own swords in their frenzy. Some

* The Vettuvans were once salt-makers.

of them represent devils or some kind of inferior evil spirits, and dance madly under the influence of the spirits which they represent. Then comes the Arayan as on the previous day with his little procession, and lastly comes the blacksmith with the sword. The procession in the evening is a great affair. Eight elephants, which kept line beautifully, took part in it when I witnessed it. One of them, very handsomely caparisoned, had on its back a priest (Mūssad) carrying a sword smothered in garlands of red flowers representing the goddess. The elephant bearing the priest is bedizened on the forehead with two golden discs, one on each side of the forehead, and over the centre of the forehead hangs a long golden ornament. These discs on the elephant's forehead are common in Malabar in affairs of ceremony. The Māppilla poets are very fond of comparing a beautiful girl's breasts to these cup-like discs. The elephant bears other jewels, and over his back is a large canopy-like red cloth richly wrought. Before the elephant walked a Nāyar carrying in his right hand in front of him a sword of the kind called nāndakam smeared with white (probably sandal) paste. To its edge, at intervals of a few inches, are fastened tiny bells, so that, when it is shaken, there is a general jingle. Just before the procession begins, there is something for the Tiyans to do. Four men of this caste having with them pūkalasams (flower kalasams), and five having jannakalasams, run along the west, north, and east sides of the temple outside the enclosure, shouting and making a noise more like the barking of dogs than anything else. The kalasams contain arrack (liquor), which is given to the temple to be used in the ceremonies. Members of certain families only are allowed to perform in this business, and for what they do each

man receives five edangālis of rice from the temple, and a small piece of the flesh of the goat which is sacrificed later. These nine men eat only once a day during the festival; they do no work, remaining quietly at home unless when at the temple; they cannot approach any one of caste lower than their own; they cannot cohabit with women; and they cannot see a woman in menstruation during these days. A crowd of Tiyans join more or less in this, rushing about and barking like dogs, making a hideous noise. They too have kalasams, and, when they are tired of rushing and barking, they drink the arrack in them. These men are always under a vow. In doing what they do, they fulfil their vow for the benefit they have already received from the goddess—cure from sickness as a rule. To the west of the temple is a circular pit—it was called the fire-pit, but there was no fire in it—and this pit all the Tiyan women of the neighbourhood circumambulate, passing from west round by north, three times, holding on the head a pewter plate, on which are a little rice, bits of plantain leaves and cocoanut, and a burning wick. As each woman completes her third round, she stands for a moment at the western side, facing east, and throws the contents of the plate into the pit. She then goes to the western gate of the enclosure, and puts down her plate for an instant while she makes profound salaam to the goddess ere going away. Now the procession starts out from the temple, issuing from the northern gate, and for a moment confronts a being so strange that he demands description. Of the many familiar demons of the Malayālis, the two most intimate are Kuttichchāttan and Gulikan, who are supposed to have assisted Kāli (who is scarcely the Kāli of Brāhmanism) in overcoming the Āsura, and on the occasion of this festival these

demons dance before her. Gulikan is represented by the Vannān and Kuttichchāttan by the Manūtan who have been already mentioned, and who are under like restrictions with the nine Tiyans. I saw poor Gulikan being made up, the operation occupying five or six hours or more before his appearance. I asked who he was, and was told he was a devil. He looked mild enough, but then his make-up had just begun. He was lying flat on the ground close by the north-east entrance of the enclosure, where presently he was to dance, a man painting his face to make it hideous and frightful. This done, the hair was dressed; large bangles were put on his arms, covering them almost completely from the shoulder to the wrist; and his head and neck were swathed and decorated. A wooden platform arrangement, from which hung a red ornamented skirt, was fastened to his hips. There was fastened to his back an elongated Prince of Wales' feathers arrangement, the top of which reached five feet above his head, and he was made to look like nothing human. Kuttichchāttan was treated in much the same manner. As the procession issues from the northern gate of the temple, where it is joined by the elephants, Gulikan stands in the northern entrance of the enclosure (which he cannot enter), facing it, and a halt is made for three minutes, while Gulikan dances. The poor old man who represented this fearful being, grotesquely terrible in his wonderful metamorphosis, must have been extremely glad when his dance was concluded, for the mere weight and uncomfortable arrangement of his paraphernalia must have been extremely exhausting. It was with difficulty that he could move at all, let alone dance. The procession passes round by east, where, at the entrance of the enclosure, Kuttichchāttan gives his

dance, round by south to the westward, and, leaving the enclosure, proceeds to a certain banyan tree, under which is a high raised platform built up with earth and stones. Preceding the procession at a distance of fifty yards are the nine men of the Tiyan caste mentioned already, carrying kalasams on their heads, and a crowd of women of the same caste, each one carrying a pewter plate, larger than the plates used when encircling the fire pit, on which are rice, etc., and the burning wick as before. The plate and its contents are on this occasion, as well as before, called talapōli. I could not make out that anything in particular is done at the banyan tree, and the procession soon returns to the temple, the nine men and the Tiyan women following, carrying their kalasams and talapōli. On the way, a number of cocks are given in sacrifice by people under a vow. In the procession are a number of devil-dancers, garlanded with white flowers of the pagoda tree mixed with red, jumping, gesticulating, and shouting, in an avenue of the crowd in front of the elephant bearing the sword. The person under a vow holds the cock towards one of these devil-dancers, who, never ceasing his gyrations and contortions, presently seizes its head, wrings it off, and flings it high in the air. The vows which are fulfilled by this rude decapitation of cocks have been made in order to bring about cure for some ailment. The procession passes through the temple yard from west to east, and proceeds half a mile to a banyan tree, under which, like the other, there is a high raised platform. When passing by the temple, the Tiyan women empty the contents of their plates in the fire pit as before, and the nine men hand over the arrack in their kalasams to the temple servants. Let me note here the curious distribution of the rice which is heaped in the fire pit.

Two-thirds of it go to the four Tiyans who carried the pūkalasams, and one-third to the five who carried the jannakalasams. Returning to the procession, we find it at the raised platform to the east of the temple. On this platform have been placed already an ordinary bamboo quart-like measure of paddy (unhusked rice), and one of rice, each covered with a plantain leaf. The principal devil-dancer takes a handful of rice and paddy, and flings it all around. The procession then visits in turn the gates of the gardens of the four owners of the temple. At each is a measure of rice and a measure of paddy covered with plantain leaves, with a small lamp or burning wick beside them, and the devil-dancer throws a handful towards the house. The procession then finds its way to a tree to the west, under which, on the platform, is now a measure of paddy and a lamp. Some Brāhmans repeat mantrams, and the elephant, the priest on his back and the sword in his hand, all three are supposed to tremble violently. Up to this time the procession has moved leisurely at a very slow march. Now, starting suddenly, it proceeds at a run to the temple, where the priest descends quickly from the elephant, and is taken inside the temple by the Mūssad priests. He, who has been carrying the sword all this time, places it on the sill of the door of the room in which it is kept for worship, and prostrates before it. The sword then shakes itself for fifteen minutes, until the chief priest stays its agitation by sprinkling on it some tirtam fluid made sacred by having been used for anointing the image of the goddess. This done, the chief amongst the devil-dancers will, with much internal tumult as well as outward convolutions, say in the way of oracle whether the dēvi has been pleased with the festival in her honour, or not. As he pronounces this oracular utterance, he falls

in a sort of swoon, and everyone, excepting only the priests and temple servants, leaves the place as quickly as possible. The sheds which have been erected for temporary habitation around the temple will be quickly demolished, and search will be made round about to make sure that no one remains near while the mystic rite of sacrifice is about to be done. When the whole place has been cleared, the four owners of the temple, who have stayed, hand over each a goat with a rope tied round its neck to the chief priest, and, as soon as they have done so, they depart. There will remain now in the temple three Mūssads, one drummer (Marayar), and two temple servants. The reason for all this secrecy seems to lie in objection to let it be known generally that any sacrifice is done. I was told again and again that there was no such thing. It is a mystic secret. The Mūssad priests repeat mantrams over the goats for an hour as a preliminary to the sacrifice. Then the chief priest dons a red silk cloth, and takes in his hand a chopper-like sword in shape something like a small bill-hook, while the goats are taken to a certain room within the temple. This room is rather a passage than a room, as there are to it but two walls running north and south. The goats are made to stand in turn in the middle of this room, facing to the south. The chief priest stands to the east of the goat, facing west, as he cuts off its head with the chopper. He never ceases his mantrams, and the goats never flinch—the effect of the mantrams. Several cocks are then sacrificed in the same place, and over the carcasses of goats and cocks there is sprinkled charcoal powder mixed in water (karutta gurusi) and saffron (turmeric) powder and lime-water (chukanna gurusi), the flow of mantrams never ceasing the while. The three Mūssads only see the sacrifice—a part of the rite which



AIYAPPAN TEMPLE, NEAR CALICUT.

is supremely secret. Equally so is that which follows. The carcass of one goat will be taken out of the temple by the northern door to the north side of the temple, and from this place one of the temple servants, who is blindfolded, drags it three times round the temple, the Mūssads following closely, repeating their mantrams, the drummer in front beating his drum softly with his fingers. The drummer dare not look behind him, and does not know what is being done. After the third round, the drummer and the temple servant go away, and the three Mūssads cook some of the flesh of the goats and one or two of the cocks (or a part of one) with rice. This rice, when cooked, is taken to the kāvu (grove) to the north of the temple, and there the Mūssads again ply their mantrams. As each mantram is ended, a handful of saffron (turmeric) powder is flung on the rice, and all the time the drummer, who by this time has returned, keeps up an obligato pianissimo with his drum, using his fingers. He faces the north, and the priests face the south. Presently the priests run (not walk) once round the temple, carrying the cooked rice, and scattering it wide as they go, repeating mantrams. They enter the temple, and remain within until daybreak. No one can leave the temple until morning comes. Before daybreak, the temple is thoroughly swept and cleaned, and then the Mūssads go out, and the five Nambūtiris again enter before sunrise, and perform the ordinary worship thrice in the day, for this day only. The next morning, the Mūssad priests return and resume their duties. Beyond noting that the weirdness of the human tumult, busy in its religious effusion, is on the last night enhanced by fireworks, mere description of the scene of the festival will not be attempted, and such charming adjuncts of it as the gallery of pretty Nāyar women looking on from the

garden fence at the seething procession in the lane below must be left to the imagination. It will have been noticed that the Nambūtiris hold aloof from the festival; they purify the temple before and after, but no more. The importance attached to the various offices of those who are attached to the temple by however slender a thread, was illustrated by a rather amusing squabble between two of the Mukkuvans, an uncle and nephew, as to which of them should receive the silver umbrella from the temple, and bear it to the house of the goldsmith to be repaired. During the festival, one of them made a rapid journey to the Zamorin (about fifty miles distant), paid some fees, and established himself as the senior who had the right to carry the umbrella.

"An important local festival is that held near Palghat, in November, in the little suburb Kalpāti inhabited entirely by Pattar Brāhmans from the east. But it is not a true Malayāli festival, and it suffices to mention its existence, for it in no way represents the religion of the Nāyar. The dragging of cars, on which are placed the images of deities, common everywhere from the temple of Jagganath at Pūri in Orissa to Cape Comorin, is quite unknown in Malabar, excepting only at Kalpāti, which is close to the eastern frontier of Malabar.

"Near Chowghāt (Chavagāt), about 30 miles to the southward of Calicut, on the backwater, at a place called Guruvayūr, is a very important temple, the property of the Zamorin, yielding a very handsome revenue. I visited the festival on one occasion, and purchase was made of a few offerings such as are made to the temple in satisfaction of vows—a very rude representation of an infant in silver, a hand, a leg, an ulcer, a pair of eyes, and, most curious of all, a silver string which represents a man, the giver. Symbolization of the offering of self is made by

a silver string as long as the giver is tall. Goldsmiths working in silver and gold are to be seen just outside the gate of the temple, ready to provide at a moment's notice the object any person intends to offer, in case he is not already in possession of his votive offering. The subject of vows can be touched on but incidentally here. A vow is made by one desiring offspring, to have his hand or leg cured, to have an ulcer cured, to fulfil any desire whatsoever, and he decides in solemn affirmation to himself to give a silver image of a child, a silver leg, and so on, in the event of his having fulfilment of his desire.

"A true Malayāli festival is that held at Kottiyūr in North Malabar, in the forest at the foot of the Wynād hills rising 3,000 to 5,000 feet from the sides of the little glade where it is situated. It is held in July during the height of the monsoon rain. Though it is a festival for high and low, these do not mix at Kottiyūr. The Nāyars go first, and after a few days, the Nāyars having done, the Tiyans, and so on. A curious feature of it is that the people going to attend it are distinctly rowdy, feeling that they have a right to abuse in the vilest and filthiest terms everyone they see on the way—perhaps a few days' march. And not only do they abuse to their hearts' content in their exuberant excitement, but they use personal violence to person and property all along the road. They return like lambs. At Kottiyūr one sees a temple of Īsvara, there called Perumāl (or Perumāl Īsvara) by the people, a low thatched building forming a hollow square, in the centre of which is the shrine, which I was not permitted to see. There were some Nambūtiri priests, who came out, and entered into conversation. The festival is not held at the temple, but in the forest about a quarter of a mile distant. This spot is deemed extremely sacred and dreadful. There was,

however, no objection to myself and my companions visiting it; we were simply begged not to go. There were with us a Nāyar and a Kurichchan, and the faces of these men, when we proceeded to wade through the little river, knee-deep and about thirty yards wide, in order to reach the sacred spot, expressed anxious wonder. They dared not acompany us across. No one (excepting, of course, a Muhammadan) would go near the place, unless during the few days of the festival, when it was safe; at all other times any man going to the place is destroyed instantly. Nothing on earth would have persuaded the Nāyar or the Kurichchiyan to cross that river. Orpheus proceeding to find his Eurydice, Danté about to enter the Inferno, had not embarked on so fearful a journey. About a hundred yards beyond the stream, we came upon the sacred spot, a little glade in the forest. In the centre of the glade is a circle of piled up stones, 12 feet in diameter. In the middle of the pile of stones is a rude lingam. Running east from the circle of the lingam is a long shed, in the middle of which is a long raised platform of brick, used apparently as a place for cooking. Around the lingam there were also thatched sheds, in which the people had lodged during the festival. Pilgrims going to this festival carry with them offerings of some kind. Tiyans take young cocoanuts. Every one who returns brings with him a swish made of split young leaves of the cocoanut palm."

Of the Kottiyūr festival, the following account is given in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "The Nambūdiri priests live in a little wayside temple at Kottiyūr, but the true shrine is a quarter of a mile away in the forest across one of the feeder streams of the Valarpattanam river. For eleven months in the year, the scene is



PALNI PILGRIM AND KAVADI.

inconceivably desolate and dreary; but during the month Edavam (May-June) upwards of 50,000 Nāyars and Tiyans from all parts of Malabar throng the shrine for the twenty-eight days of the annual festival. During the rest of the year, the temple is given up to the revels of Siva and Parvati, and the impious Hindu who dares to intrude is consumed instantly to ashes. The two great ceremonies are the Neyyāttam and the Elanīrāttam, the pouring of ghee (clarified butter) and the pouring of the milk of the green cocoanut. The former is performed by the Nāyars, who attend the festival first, and the latter by Tiyans. In May, all roads lead to Kottiyūr, and towards the middle of the month the ghee pourers, as the Nāyar pilgrims are called, who have spent the previous four weeks in fasting and purificatory rites, assemble in small shrines subordinate to the Kottiyūr temple. Thence, clad in white, and bearing each upon his head a pot of ghee, they set forth in large bodies headed by a leader. At Manattana the pilgrims from all parts of Malabar meet, and thence to Kottiyūr the procession is unbroken. However long their journey, the pilgrims must eat only once, and the more filthy their language, the more orthodox is their conduct. As many as five thousand pots of ghee are poured over the lingam every year. After the Neyyāttam ceremony, the Nāyars depart, and it is the turn of the Tiyans. Their preparations are similar to those of the Nāyars, and their language *en route* is even more startling. Eruvatti near Kadirūr is the place where most of them assemble for their pilgrimage, and their green cocoanuts are presented gratis by the country people as an offering to the temple. The Elanīrāttam ceremony begins at midnight, and the pilgrims heap up their cocoanuts in front of the shrine continuously till the evening of the

same day. Each Tiyan then marches thrice round the heap, and falls prostrate before the lingam; and a certain Nāyar sub-caste removes the husks preparatory to the spilling of the milk. The festival finally closes with a mysterious ceremony, in which ghee and mantrams play a great part, performed for two days consecutively by the presiding Nambūdiri, and Kottiyūr is then deserted for another year."

"A shrine," Mr. Fawcett continues, "to which the Malayālis, Nāyars included, resort is that of Subramania at Palni in the north-west corner of the Madura district about a week's march from the confines of Malabar near Palghat. Not only are vows paid to this shrine, but men, letting their hair grow for a year after their father's death, proceed to have it cut there. The plate shows an ordinary Palni pilgrim. The arrangement which he is carrying is called a kāvadi. There are two kinds of kāvadi, a milk kāvadi containing milk, and a fish kāvadi containing fish, in a pot. The vow may be made in respect of either, each being appropriate to certain circumstances. When the time comes near for the pilgrim to start for Palni, he dresses in reddish orange cloths, shoulders his kāvadi, and starts out. Together with a man ringing a bell, and perhaps one with a tom-tom, with ashes on his face, he assumes the rôle of a beggar. The well-to-do are inclined to reduce the beggar period to the minimum; but a beggar every votary must be, and as a beggar he goes to Palni in all humbleness and humiliation, and there he fulfils his vow, leaves his kāvadi and his hair, and a small sum of money. Though the individuals about to be noticed were not Nāyars, their cases illustrate very well the religious idea of the Nāyar as expressed under certain circumstances, for between the Nāyars and these there

is in this respect little if any difference. It was at Guruvayūr in November, 1895. On a high raised platform under a peepul tree were a number of people under vows, bound for Palni. A boy of 14 had suffered as a child from epilepsy, and seven years ago his father vowed on his behalf that, if he were cured, he would make the pilgrimage to Palni. He wore a string of beads round his neck, and a like string on his right arm. These were in some way connected with the vow. His head was bent, and he sat motionless under his kāvadi, leaning on the bar, which, when he carried it, rested on his shoulder. He could not go to Palni until it was revealed to him in a dream when he was to start. He had waited for this dream seven years, subsisting on roots (yams, etc.), and milk—no rice. Now he had had the long-looked-for dream, and was about to start. Another pilgrim was a man wearing an oval band of silver over the lower portion of the forehead, almost covering his eyes; his tongue protruding beyond the teeth, and kept in position by a silver skewer through it. The skewer was put in the day before, and was to be left in for forty days. He had been fasting for two years. He was much under the influence of his god, and whacking incessantly at a drum in delirious excitement. Several of the pilgrims had a handkerchief tied over the mouth, they being under a vow of silence. One poor man wore the regular instrument of silence, the mouth-lock—a wide silver band over the mouth, and a skewer piercing both cheeks. He sat patiently in a nice tent-like affair, about three feet high. People fed him with milk, etc., and he made no effort to procure food, relying merely on what was given him. The use of the mouth-lock is common with the Nāyars when they assume the pilgrim's robes and set out for Palni;

and I have often seen many of them garbed and mouth-locked, going off on a pilgrimage to that place. Pilgrims generally go in crowds under charge of a priestly guide, one who, having made a certain number of journeys to the shrine, wears a peculiar sash and other gear. They call themselves pūjāris, and are quite *au fait* with all the ceremonial prior to the journey, as well as with the exigencies of the road. As I stood there, one of these pūjāris stood up amidst the recumbent crowd. He raised his hands towards the temple a little to the west, and then spread out his hands as if invoking a blessing on the people around him. Full of religious fervour, he was (apparently at any rate) unconscious of all but the spiritual need of his flock.

"Brief mention must be made of the festival held at Kodungallūr near Cranganore in the northernmost corner of the Cochin State, as it possesses some strange features peculiar to Malabar, and is much frequented by the Nāyars. I have been disappointed in obtaining particulars of the festival, so make the following excerpt from Logan's Manual of Malabar. 'It takes the people in great crowds from their homes. The whole country near the lines of march rings with the shouts "Nada-a Nada-a" of the pilgrims to the favourite shrine. Of what takes place when the pilgrims reach this spot perhaps the less said the better. In their passage up to the shrine, the cry of "Nada-a Nada-a" (march, march away) is varied by terms of unmeasured abuse levelled at the goddess (a Bhagavati) of the shrine. This abusive language is supposed to be acceptable to her. On arrival at the shrine, they desecrate it in every conceivable way, believing that this too is acceptable; they throw stones and filth, howling volleys of

opprobrium at her house. The chief of the fisherman caste, styled Kūli Muttatta Arayan, has the privilege of being the first to begin the work of polluting the Bhoot or shrine. Into other particulars it is unnecessary to enter. Cocks are slaughtered and sacrificed. The worshipper gets flowers only, and no holy water after paying his vows. Instead of water, he proceeds outside and drinks arrack or toddy, which an attendant Nāyar serves out. All castes are free to go, including Tiyars and low caste people. The temple was originally only a Bhoot or holy tree with a platform. The image in the temple is said to have been introduced only of recent years.' It is a pity Mr. Logan is so reticent. My information is that the headman of the Mukkuvans opens the festival by solemnly making a fæcal deposit on the image. Here again there is the same strange union of everything that is filthy, abusive, foul and irreverent, with every mode of expressing the deepest religious feeling."

Of the cock festival at Cranganore, the following account is given by Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar * in his interesting little book on Malabar and its folk. "In the midst of its native charms is situated a temple dedicated to Kali, the goddess who presides over the infectious diseases, cholera and small-pox. She is a virgin goddess, whom no quantity of blood will satisfy. The temple is an old-fashioned one, presenting no striking architectural peculiarities. The priestly classes attached to it are not, as usual, Brāhmins, but a peculiar sect called Adigals, of whom there are but three families in the whole of Malabar. The Brāhmins are purposely excluded from participation in the poojah ceremonies,

* Malabar and its Folk, Madras, 1900.

lest their extreme sanctity might increase the powers of the goddess to a dangerous extent. Poojahs are daily offered to her. An annual festival known as the Bharani, connected with this goddess, plays a most important part in the religious history of Malabar. It comes off in the Malayalam month of Meenam (about March or April). Pilgrimages undertaken to the temple on this occasion are potent enough to safeguard the pilgrims, and their friends and relations, from the perilous attacks of cholera and small-pox. Hence people resort thither annually by thousands from almost all parts of Malabar; and, the more north you go, the stronger will you find the hold which the goddess has upon the popular imagination. The chief propitiatory offering on the occasion is the sacrifice of cocks. In fact, every family makes a point of undertaking this sacred mission. People arrange to start on it at an auspicious moment, on a fixed day in small isolated bodies. Preparations are made for the journey. Rice, salt, chillies, curry-stuffs, betel leaves and nuts, a little turmeric powder and pepper, and, above all, a number of cocks form an almost complete paraphernalia of the pilgrimage. These are all gathered and preserved in separate bundles inside a large bag. When the appointed hour comes, they throw this bag on their shoulders, conceal their money in their girdles, and, with a native-fashioned umbrella in the one hand and a walking-stick in the other, they start, each from his own house, to meet the brother pilgrims at the rendezvous. Here a foreman is selected practically by common consent. Then commences the vociferous recitation of that series of obscene songs and ballads, which characterises the pilgrimage all along. The foreman it is that opens the ball. He is caught up by others

in equally loud and profuse strains. This is continued right up till the beginning of their homeward journey. Nobody whom they come across on the way can successfully escape the coarse Billingsgate of these religious zealots. Even women are not spared. Perhaps it is in their case that the pilgrims wax all the more eloquently vulgar. A number of cock's feathers are stuck or tied upon the tip of a stick, and with this as a wand they begin to dance and pipe in a set style, which is extremely revolting to every sense of decency. Some of the pilgrims walk all the distance to the temple, while others go by boat or other conveyance ; but in neither case do they spare any passer-by. Hundreds of gallons of arrack and toddy are consumed during the festival. The pilgrims reach the temple in their dirty attire. The temple premises are crowded to overflowing. The worship of the goddess is then commenced. The offerings consist of the sacrifice of cocks at the temple altar, turmeric powder, but principally of pepper, as also some other objects of lesser importance. A particular spot inside the temple is set apart for the distribution of what is called manjal prasadam (turmeric powder on which divine blessings have been invoked). The work of doling it out is done by young maidens, who are during the process subjected to ceaseless volleys of vile and vulgar abuse. Now, leaving out of account the minor ceremonies, we come to the principal one, viz., the sacrifice of cocks. The popular idea is that the greater the number of cocks sacrificed, the greater is the efficacy of the pilgrimage. Hence men vie with one another in the number of cocks that they carry on the journey. The sacrifice is begun, and then there takes place a regular scramble for the sanctified spot reserved for this butchering ceremony. One man holds a cock by the

trunk, and another pulls out its neck by the head, and, in the twinkling of an eye, by the intervention of a sharpened knife, the head is severed from the trunk. The blood then gushes forth in forceful and continuous jets, and is poured on a piece of granite specially reserved. Then another is similarly slaughtered, and then as many as each of the pilgrims can bring. In no length of time, the whole of the temple yard is converted into one horrible expanse of blood, rendering it too slippery to be safely walked over. The piteous cries and death throes of the poor devoted creatures greatly intensify the horror of the scene. The stench emanating from the blood mixing with the nauseating smell of arrack renders the occasion all the more revolting. One other higher and more acceptable kind of offering requires more than a passing mention. When a man is taken ill of any infectious disease, his relations generally pray to this goddess for his recovery, solemnly covenanting to perform what goes by the name of a thulabharum ceremony. This consists in placing the patient in one of the scale-pans of a huge balance, and weighing him against gold, or more generally pepper (and sometimes other substances as well), deposited in the other scale-pan. Then this weight of the substance is offered to the goddess. This is to be performed right in front of the goddess in the temple yard. The usual offerings being over, the homeward journey of the pilgrims is begun. Though the festival is called Bharani, yet all the pilgrims must vacate the temple on the day previous to the Bharani day. For, from that day onwards, the temple doors are all shut up, and, for the next seven days, the whole place is given over to the worst depredations of the countless demons over whom this blood-thirsty goddess holds sway. No human beings can safely remain there, lest

they might become a prey to these ravenous demons. In short, the Bharani day inaugurates a reign of terror in the locality, lasting for these seven days. Afterwards, all the dirt is removed. The temple is cleansed and sanctified, and again left open to public worship. The pilgrims return, but not in the same manner in which they repaired thither. During the backward journey, no obscene songs or expressions are indulged in. They are to come back quietly and calmly, without any kind of demonstrations. They get back to their respective homes, and distribute the sandals and other pujah substances to their relations and friends who have elected to remain at home; and the year's pilgrimage is brought to a close."

"The month Karkkatakam," Mr. Fawcett writes, "when the Malayālis say the body is cool, is the time when, according to custom, the Nāyar youths practice physical exercises. At Payōli in North Malabar, when I was there in 1895, the local instructor of athletics was a Paravan, a mason by caste. As he had the adjunct Kurup to his name, it took some time to discover the fact. Teachers of his ilk are invariably of the Paravan caste, and, when they are believed to be properly accomplished, they are given the honorific Kurup. So carefully are things regulated that no other person was permitted to teach athletics within the amsham (a local area, a small county), and his womenfolk had privileges, they only being the midwives who could attend on the Nāyar women of the amsham. His fee for a course of exercises for the month was ten rupees. He, and some of his pupils, gave an exhibition of their quality. Besides bodily contortions and somersaults, practiced in a long low-roofed shed having a sandy floor, there is play with the following instruments :—watta ; cheruvadi,

a short stick; and a stick like a quarter-staff called a sariravadi, or stick the length of one's body. The watta is held in the right hand as a dagger; it is used to stab or strike and, in some ingenious way, turn over an opponent. The total length of the watta is two feet, and of the cheruvadi about three feet. The latter is squared at the ends, and is but a short staff. It is held in the right hand a few inches from the end, and is used for striking and guarding only. The sariravadi is held at or near one end by one or by both hands. The distance between the hands is altered constantly, and so is the end of the stick, which is grasped now by one, now by another end by either hand, as occasion may require; sometimes it is grasped in the middle. The performance with these simple things was astonishing. I should say the watta and the cheruvadi represented swords, or rather that they were used for initiation or practice in swordmanship, when the Nāyars were the military element in Malabar. The opponents, who faced each other with the sariravadi or quarter-staff, stood thirty feet apart, and, as if under the same stimulus, each kicked one leg high in the air, gave several lively bounds in the air, held their staff horizontally in front with out-stretched arms, came down slowly on the haunches, placed the staff on the ground, bent over, and touched it with the forehead. With a sudden bound they were again on their feet, and, after some preliminary pirouetting, went for each other tooth and nail. The sword play, which one sees during festive ceremonies, such as a marriage or the like, is done by the hereditary retainers, who fight imaginary foes, and destroy and vanquish opponents with much contortion of body, and always indulge in much of this preliminary overture to their performance. There is always, by

way of preliminary, a high kick in the air, followed by squatting on the haunches, bounding high, turning, twisting, pirouetting, and all the time swinging the sword unceasingly above, below, behind the back, under the arm or legs, in ever so many impossible ways. Nāyar shields are made of wood, covered with leather, usually coloured bright red. Within the boss are some hard seeds, or metal balls loose in a small space, so that there is a jingling sound like that of the small bells on the ankles of the dancer, when the shield is oscillated or shaken in the hand. The swords are those which were used ordinarily for fighting. There are also swords of many patterns for processional and other purposes, more or less ornamented about the handle, and half way up the blade."

"The Nāyars," Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes, "have a distinct feudal organisation, and the division of their territories had an unmistakeable reference to it. The territorial unit was the dēsam, presided over by a Dāsavazhi. A number of dēsams adjoining one another constituted a nādu, which was under the jurisdiction of a chieftain called the Nāduvazhi. Above the Nāduvazhis was the Rājah, the highest suzerain in the country. In course of time, each nādu split itself up into a certain number of taras, over the affairs of which a Karanavan, or elder, presided. An assembly of these Karanavans constituted the six hundred—an old socio-military organisation of the Nāyars in mediæval times. These six hundred are referred to in two places in the second Syrian Christian document, which bears the date 925 A.D. In a South Travancore inscription, dated 371 M.E., the same organisation is referred to as Venattarunuru, or the six hundred of Venad, and one of their duties evidently related to the supervision of the

working of temples and charitable institutions connected therewith. As Venad was divided into eighteen districts in ancient days, there might have been altogether eighteen six hundred in the country. The Nāduvazhis possessed considerable authority in all social matters, and possessed enough lands to be cultivated by their Kudiyans. A feudal basis was laid for the whole organisation. Large numbers served as soldiers in times of war, and cultivated their lands when the country was quiet. In modern times, none of them take to military service in Travancore, except those employed as sepoys in the Nāyar Brigade."

Concerning the organisation of the Nāyars, Mr. Logan writes that they were, "until the British occupied the country, the militia of the district (Malabar). This name implies that they were the 'leaders' of the people. Originally they seem to have been organised into six hundreds, and each six hundred seems to have had assigned to it the protection of all the people in a nād or country. The nād was in turn split up into taras, a Dravidian word signifying originally a foundation, the foundation of a house, hence applied collectively to a street, as in Tamil teru, in Telugu teruvu, and in Canarese and Tulu teravu. The tara was the Nāyar territorial unit of organisation for civil purposes, and was governed by representatives of the caste, who were styled Kāranavar or elders. The six hundred was probably composed exclusively of those Karanavar or elders, who were in some parts called Mukhyastans (chief men) or Madhyastans (mediators), or Pramānis (chief men), and there seem to have been four families of them to each tara, so that the nād must have originally consisted of one hundred and fifty taras. This tara organisation of the protector caste played a most important

part in the political history of the country, for it was the great bulwark against the tyranny and oppression of the Rājas. The evidence of the Honourable East India Company's linguist (interpreter, agent) at Calicut, which appears in the diary of the Tellicherry Factory under date 28th May, 1746, deserves to be here reproduced. He wrote as follows: 'These Nāyars, being heads of the Calicut people, resemble the parliament, and do not obey the king's dictates in all things, but chastise his ministers when they do unwarrantable acts.' The parliament referred to must have been the kūttam (assembly) of the nād. The kūttam answered many purposes when combined action on the part of the community was necessary. The Nāyars assembled in their kūttams whenever hunting, or war, or arbitration, or what not was in hand, and this organisation does not seem to have been confined to Malabar, for the koot organisation of the people of South Canara gave the British officers much trouble in 1832–33. In so far as Malabar was concerned, the system seems to have remained in an efficient state down to the time of the British occupation, and the power of the Rājas was strictly limited. Mr. Murdoch Brown, of Anjarakandi, who knew the country well, thus wrote to Mr. Francis Buchanan in the earliest years of the present (nineteenth) century regarding the despotic action of the Rājas when constituted, after the Mysorean conquest, the revenue agents of the Government of Haidar Ali. 'By this new order of things, these latter (the Rājas) were vested with despotic authority over the other inhabitants, instead of the very limited prerogatives that they had enjoyed by the feudal system, under which they could neither exact revenue from the lands of their vassals, nor exercise any, direct authority in their districts.' And

again, 'The Rāja was no longer what he had been, the head of a feudal aristocracy with limited authority, but the all-powerful deputy of a despotic prince, whose military force was always at his command to curb or chastise any of the chieftains who were inclined to dispute or disobey his mandates.' * From the earliest times, therefore, down to the end of the eighteenth century, the Nāyar tara and nād organization kept the country from oppression and tyranny on the part of the rulers, and to this fact more than to any other is due the comparative prosperity, which the Malayāli country so long enjoyed, and which made Calicut at one time the great emporium of trade between the East and the West. But, besides protection, the Nāyars had originally another most important function in the body politic. Besides being protectors, they were also supervisors or overseers, a duty which, as a very ancient deed testifies, was styled kānam—a Dravidian word derived from the verb kānuka (to see, etc.). Parasu Rāman (so the tradition preserved in the Kēralolpatti runs) separated the Nāyars into taras, and ordered that to them belonged the duty of supervision (*lit.* kan = the eye), the executive power (*lit.* kei = the hand, as the emblem of power), and the giving of orders (*lit.* kalpana, order, command), so as to prevent the rights from being curtailed, or suffered to fall into disuse. The Nāyars were originally the overseers or supervisors of the nād, and they seem to have been employed in this capacity as the collectors of the share of produce of the land originally reserved for Government purposes. As remuneration for this service, and for their other function as protectors, another share of the produce of the soil

* Buchanan, Mysore, Canara and Malabar.

seems to have been reserved specially for them. It would be well worth the study of persons acquainted with other districts of the Presidency to ascertain whether somewhat similar functions to these (protection and supervision) did not originally appertain to the Kāvalgars of Tamil districts and the Kāpus in the Telugu country, for both of these words seem to have come from the same root as the Malayālam kānam. And it is significant that the Tamil word now used for proprietorship in the soil is kāni-yātchi, to which word the late Mr. F. W. Ellis in his paper on Mirasi Rights assigned a similar derivation."

The occupation of the Nāyars is described by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar as "comprising all kinds of worldly pursuits. So late as the end of the eighteenth century, there were with the then Mahārāja of Travancore a hundred thousand soldiers, consisting of Nāyars and Chovas, armed with arrows, spears, swords and battle-axes. The chief occupation of the Nāyars is agriculture. Cultivation of a slipshod, time-honoured type is the forte of the Nāyar, for which he has always found time from times of old, though engaged in other occupations as well. In the Velakali, a kind of mock fight, which is one of the items of the utasom programme in every important temple in Malabar, the dress worn by the Nāyars is supposed to be their ancient military costume. Even now, among the Nāyars who form the Mahārāja's own Brigade, agriculture, to which they are enabled to attend during all their off-duty days, goes largely to supplement their monthly pay. Various other occupations, all equally necessary for society, have been, according to the Kēralavakasakrama, assigned to the Nāyars, and would seem to have determined their original sub-divisions. They are domestic servants in Brāhman

and Kshatriya houses and temples, and deal in dairy produce, as well as being engaged in copper-sheet roofing, tile-making, pottery, palanquin-bearing, and so on. But these traditional occupations are fast ceasing under the ferment of a new civilisation. In the matter of education, the Nāyars occupy a prominent position. Almost every Nāyar girl is sent to the village school to learn the three R's, quite as much as a matter of course as the schooling of boys. This constitutes a feature of Malabar life that makes it the most literate country in all India, especially in respect of the female sex. After Rāmanujam Ezhuttachchan developed and enriched the Malayālam language, numerous Āsans or village teachers came into existence in different parts of Malabar. After a preliminary study of Malayālam, such as desired higher, *i.e.*, Sanskrit education, got discipled to an Ambalavāsi or a Sastri. Even to-day the estimable desire to study Sanskrit is seen in some Nāyar youths, who have readily availed themselves of the benefit of the local Sanskrit college. In respect of English education, the Nāyars occupy a prominent position. The facility afforded by the Government of Travancore for the study of English is being largely availed of by Nāyars, and it is a matter deserving to be prominently recorded that, in recent years, several Nāyar girls have passed the Matriculation examination of the University of Madras."

It is noted, in the Gazetteer of Malabar, that "the Nāyars as a class are the best educated and the most advanced of the communities in Malabar (excepting perhaps the Pattar Brāhmans, who are not strictly a Malayālam class), and are intellectually the equals of the Brāhmans of the East Coast. Many of them have risen to the highest posts in Government, and the caste

has supplied many of the leading members of the learned professions."

Nāyi (dog).—An exogamous sept of Kuruba.

Nāyinar.—Nāyinar, Nāyanar, or Nainar, has been recorded as a section of Vellālas, who are thought to be descended from Jains who were converted to Hinduism, and as a title of Jains, Kaikōlans, Pallis, and Udaiyāns. Nāyanikulam occurs as a synonym of Bōya. The word Nāyinar is the same as Nāyaka, meaning lord or master, and the Saivite saints, being religious teachers, are so called, *e.g.*, Sundara Mūrti Nāyanar.

Nāyinda.—Recorded, in the Mysore Census Report, 1901, as the name of a caste, which follows the hereditary occupation of barber, and also of agriculture. "They are," it is there said, "members of the village hierarchy. They are paid, like the Agasa (washerman), in kind for their services. They are also fiddlers, and have the exclusive right of wind instruments. They are known as Kēlasiga or Hajām. They are both Saivites and Vaishnavites. A section of them wear the lingam, and follow Lingayetism. They are known as Silavanta. These people are largely in requisition at feasts, marriages, etc., when they form the music band." Kelasi is the name of a Canarese barber caste, and Hajām is a Hindustani word for barber.

Nedungādi.—This name, denoting a settlement in Nedunganād in the Walluvanād taluk of Malabar, has been returned as a sub-caste of Nāyars and Sāmantas.

Nekkāra.—A small class of washermen in South Canara. The women only are said to do the washing, while the men are employed as devil-dancers.

Nellika (*Phyllanthus Emblica*).—An illam of Tiyan.

Nellu (paddy, unhusked rice).—A gōtra of Kurni.

Nemilli (peacock).—An exogamous sept of Bōya and Balija.

Nērali (*Eugenia Jambolana*).—An exogamous sept of Gangadikāra Holeya.

Nerati.—Nerati or Neravati is a sub-division of Kāpu.

Nēse.—An occupational term, meaning weaver applied to several of the weaving castes, but more especially to the Kurnis. It is noted, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, that "in the inscriptions of Rāja Rāja the Chōla king, about the beginning of the eleventh century, the Paraiyan caste is called by its present name. It had then two sub-divisions, Nesavu (the weavers) and Ulavu (the ploughman)."

Nētpanivāndlu (neyyuta, to weave).—Recorded by the Rev. J. Cain * as a name for Māla weavers.

Nettikōtala.—In a note on the Nettikōtalas or Neththikōtalasi, Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao writes that they correspond to the Kalladi Siddhans of the Tamil country. The name means those who cut their foreheads. They are mendicants who beg from Gavara Kōmatis, whom they are said to have assisted in days of old by delaying the progress of Rāja Vishnu Vardhana. (*See* Kōmati.) When their dues are not promptly paid, they make cuts in their foreheads and other parts of the body, and make blood flow.

Nēyigē.—The silk and cotton hand-loom weavers of the Mysore Province are, in the Census Report, 1891, dealt with collectively under the occupational name Nēyigē (weaving), which includes Bilimagga, Dēvānga, Khatri, Patvēgar, Sāle, Saurāshtra (Patnūlkāran), Sēniga and Togata.

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* Ind. Ant., VIII, 1879.

Neytikkar.—Weavers of coir (cocoanut fibre) mats in Malabar.

Nēyyala.—The Nēyyala are a Telugu fishing caste found chiefly in Vizagapatam and Ganjam, for the following note on whom I am indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. The name is derived from the Telugu nēyyalu, meaning fried rice or cholam (*Sorghum vulgare*), which is made by female members of the caste, especially during the harvest season, into balls with jaggery (crude sugar). These are carried about the country by the men for sale to those engaged in reaping the crop and others. As payment, they receive from the reapers a portion of the grain which they are cutting. A further occupation of the caste is fishing with konti vala, or koyyala vala *i.e.*, nets supported on a row of bamboo sticks, which are placed in shallow water, and dragged by two men.

The Nāga (cobra) is reverenced by the caste. A Brāhman officiates at marriages, during which the sacred thread is worn. The remarriage of widows is permitted, provided that the woman has no children by her first husband. Divorce is not allowed. The dead are burnt, and the chinna (little) and pedda rōzu (big day) death ceremonies are observed.

As a caste, the Nēyyalas do not drink intoxicating liquor, and eat only in Brāhman houses. Their usual title is Ayya.

Nēyye (clarified butter).—An occupational sub-division of Kōmati.

Nīla (blue).—An exogamous sept of Mēdara.

Nīlagāra (indigo people).—The name of a class of dyers, who are, in the Mysore Census Report, 1901, included in the Kumbāra or potter caste.

Nīli (indigo).—An exogamous sept of Padma Salē and Togata.

Nirganti.—Recorded, in the Mysore and Coorg Gazetteer, as a regulator and distributor of water to irrigated lands. He is usually a Holeya by caste.

Nirpūsi (wearers of sacred ashes).—Recorded, at times of census, as a sub-division of Pāndya Vellālas. Nīrpūsi Vellala is described, in the Gazetteer of the South Arcot district, as a name current in the South Arcot district meaning Vellālas who put on holy ash, in reference to certain Jains, who formerly became Saivites, taking off their sacred threads, and putting holy ashes on their foreheads.

Nityadāsu.—Nityadāsu, or Nityulu, meaning immortal slaves, is a name by which some Māla Dāsaris style themselves.

Nodha.—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a very small caste of hill cultivators and earth-workers in the Oriya country.

Nōkkan.—The Nōkkans, who often go by the name of Jādipillais (children of the caste), are a class of mendicants, who beg from members of the Palli caste. The word Nōkkan is said to mean 'he who looks'. The Nōkkans make periodical visits to villages where Pallis live, and receive from them a small fee in money. They attend at Palli marriages, and, during processions, carry flags (palempores) bearing devices of Hanumān, tigers, Agni, etc., which are made at Kālahasti.

The Nōkkans claim fees from the Pallis, because one of their ancestors helped them. The legend runs as follows. During the reign of a Palli king at Conjeeveram, a car, bearing the idol of the god, stood still, and could not be moved. A human sacrifice was considered necessary, but no one would offer himself as a victim. A Nōkkan came forward, and allowed his only daughter, who was pregnant, to be sacrificed

Pleased at his behaviour, the king ordered that the Pallis should in future treat the Nōkkans as their Jādipillais. Some Nōkkans say that they were presented with copper-grants, one of which is reputed to be in the possession of one Nōkka Ramaswāmi of Mulavāyal village in the Ponnēri tāluk of the Chingleput district.

In the course of their rounds, the Nōkkans repeat the story of the origin of the Pallis, one version of which runs as follows. Two Asuras, Vāthāpi and Enādhapi, who were ruling at Ratnagiripatnam, obtained at the hands of Siva, by means of severe tapas (penance), the following boon. No child should die within their dominions, and the Asuras should be invincible, and not meet their death at the hands of uterine-born beings. The Dēvatas and others, unable to bear the tyranny of the Asuras, prayed to Brahma for rescue. He directed them to the Rishi Jambuvamuni, who was doing penance on the banks of the river Jumna. This Rishi is said to have married a woman named Āsendi, who was born from the cheeks of Parvati. Hearing the request of the Dēvatas, the Rishi lighted the sacred fire, and therefrom arose a being called Rūdra Vanniyan, and forty other warriors, including Nīlakanta, Gangabala, and Vajrabāhu. The Pallis are descended from these fire-born heroes. (*See* Palli.)

Nōkkans wear the sacred thread, and carry with them a big drum and a gourd pipe like that used by snake-charmers.

Noliya.—A synonym used by Oriya castes for the Telugu Jalāris.

Nonaba.—A territorial sub-division of Vakkaliga. The name is derived from Nonambavādi, one of the former great divisions of the Tanjore country.

Nōttakāran.—The office of village Nōttakāran, or tester, has been abolished in modern times. It was

generally held by a goldsmith, whose duty was to test the rupees when the land revenue was being gathered in, and see that they were not counterfeit.

Nuchchu (broken rice).—A gōtra of Kurni.

Nūkala (coarse grain powder).—An exogamous sept of Padma Sālē.

Nulayan.—In the Madras Census Report, 1901, ninety-six individuals are recorded as belonging to a small caste of Malayālam fishermen and boatmen. The Nulayans are found in Travancore, and were returned in the census of Malabar, as the two small British settlements of Anjengo and Tangacheri in Travancore are under the jurisdiction of the Collector of Malabar.

Nūnē (oil).—An occupational sub-division of Kōmati.

Nunia (nuno, salt).—A sub-division of Odiya.

Nūrankurup.—An occupational name for Paravans settled in Malabar, whose employment is that of lime-burners (nūru, lime).

Nūrbāsh.—Recorded, at the census, 1901, as a synonym of Dūdēkula. A corruption of nūrbaf (weaving).

Nūvvala (gingelly : *Sesamum indicum*).—An exogamous sept of Kamma and Mēdara. Gingelly seeds, from which an oil is extracted, "form an essential article of certain religious ceremonies of the Hindus, and have therefore received the names of hōma-dhānya or the sacrificial grain, and pitri-tarpana or the grain that is offered as an oblation to deceased ancestors." (*U. C. Dutt.*) During the death ceremonies of some Brāhmans, libations of water mixed with gingelly seeds, called tīlothakam, and a ball of rice, are offered daily to two stones representing the spirit of the deceased.

Nyāyam (justice).—An exogamous sept of Padma Sālē.

Ōcchan.—The Ōcchans are a class of temple priests, who usually officiate as pūjāris at Pidāri and other Amman (Grāma Dēvata) temples. They are for the most part Saivites, but some belong to the Vadagalai or Tengalai Vaishnava sects. Some of the pūjāris wear the sacred thread when within the temple. Their insignia are the udukkai, or hour-glass shaped drum, and the silambu, or hollow brass ring filled with bits of brass, which rattle when it is shaken. In the Chingleput district, some Ōcchans act as dancing-masters to Dēvadāsis, and are sometimes called Nattuvan.

The name Ōcchan is derived from the Tamil ōchai, meaning sound, in reference to the usual mode of invoking the Grāma Dēvatas (village deities) by beating on a drum and singing their praises. It has been suggested that Ōcchan is a contracted form of Uvacchan, which occurs in certain old inscriptions.* Of these, the oldest is dated Sakha 1180 (A.D. 1258), and refers to the tax on Uvacchas. Another inscription, in which the same tax is referred to, is dated Sakha 1328 (A.D. 1406). In both these inscriptions, Uvacchan has been interpreted as referring to Jonakas, who are a class of Muhammadans. This is one of the meanings given by Winslow,† who also gives "a caste of drummers at temples, Ōcchan."

In the northern districts, the Ōcchans are divided into five sections, called Mārayan, Pāndi, Kandappan, Periya or Pallavarāyan, and Pulavan. Mārayan is also the name of temple priests in Travancore, on whom the title Ōcchan is bestowed as a mark of royal favour by the Travancore sovereigns.‡ The Ōcchans have

* E. Hultzsch. South Indian Inscriptions, I. 82, 108, 1890.

† Comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary.

‡ Travancore Census Report, 1901.

many titles, *e.g.*, Archaka or Umai Archaka, Dēvar, Parasaivan, Mudaliar, Vallabarāyan, Pūsāli, Pulavar, and Kamban. Of these, the last two are said to be derived from the Tamil epic poet Kamban, who is traditionally believed to have belonged to the Ōcchan caste. There is a legend that Kamban was on his way to the residence of a king, when he heard an oil-monger, who was driving his bulls, remonstrate with them, saying "Should you kick against each other because the poet Kamban, like the Ōcchan he is, hums his verse?" On hearing this, Kamban approached the oil-monger, and went with him to the king, to whom he reported that he had been insulted. By order of the king, the oil-monger burst forth into verse, and explained how his bulls had taken fright on hearing Kamban's impromptu singing. Kamban was greatly pleased with the poet oil-monger, and begged the king to let him go with honours heaped on him.

In the southern districts, more especially in Madura and Tinnevelly, it is usual for an Ōcchan to claim his paternal aunt's daughter in marriage. In the northern districts, a man may also marry his maternal uncle's or sister's daughter. Brāhman Gurukkals officiate at marriages. In their puberty, marriage, and death ceremonies, the Ōcchans closely follow the Pallis or Vanniyans. The dead are burnt, and Brāhmans officiate at the funeral ceremonies.

The caste is an organised one, and there is usually a headman, called Periyathanakāran, at places where Ōcchans occur.

Ōda vāndlu (boatmen).—A synonym of Mīla, a fishing caste in Ganjam and Vizagapatam. Some prosperous Mīlas have adopted Ōda Balija as their caste name. (*See* Vāda.)

Ōdan.—An occupational name of a class of Nāyars, who are tile-makers.

Odāri.—The Odāris or Vodāris are Tulu-speaking potters in the South Canara district. Those who have abandoned the profession of potter call themselves Mūlia, as also do some potters, and those who are employed as pūjāris (priests) at bhūthasthanas (devil shrines). In many cases, the headman combines the duties of that office with those of pūjāri, and is called Mūlia. Otherwise his title is Gurikāra.

The Canarese potters in South Canara, in making pots, use the ordinary wheel, which is rotated by means of a long stick. The wheel of the Odāris is more primitive, consisting of a small disc, concave above, made of unburnt clay, fitting by means of a pebble pivot into a pebble socket, which is rotated by hand.

Like other Tulu castes, the Odāris worship bhūthas, but also reverence Venkatarāmana.

In their marriage ceremonial, the Odāris follow the Bant type. At the betrothal, the headmen or fathers of the contracting couple exchange betel, and the party of the future bridegroom give a ring to the people of the bride-elect. The marriage rites are completed in a single day. A bench is placed within the marriage pandal (booth), and covered with clothes brought by the Madivāli (washerman caste). The bridegroom is conducted thither by the bride's brother, and, after going round three times, takes his seat. He is generally preceded by women carrying lights, rice and fruits before him. The lamp is hung up, and the other articles are deposited on the ground. One by one, the women throw a grain of rice, first over the lamp, and then a few grains over the head of the bridegroom. Then the barber comes, and, after throwing rice, shaves

the face of the bridegroom, using milk instead of water. The bride is also shaved by a barber woman. The pair are decorated, and brought to the pandal, where those assembled throw rice over their heads, and make presents of money. Their hands are then united by the headman, and the dhāre water poured over them by the maternal uncle of the bride.

An interesting rite in connection with pregnancy is the presentation of a fowl or two to the pregnant woman by her maternal uncle. The fowls are tended with great care, and, if they lay eggs abundantly, it is a sign that the pregnant woman will be prolific.

The dead are either buried or cremated. If cremation is resorted to, the final death ceremonies (bojja) must be celebrated on the eleventh or thirteenth day. If the corpse has been buried, these ceremonies must not take place before the lapse of at least a month.

Oddē.—The Oddēs or Voddas, who are commonly called Wudders, are summed up by Mr. H. A. Stuart * as being "the navvies of the country, quarrying stone, sinking wells, constructing tank bunds, and executing other kinds of earthwork more rapidly than any other class, so that they have got almost a monopoly of the trade. They are Telugu people, who came originally from Orissa, whence their name. Were they more temperate, they might be in very good circumstances, but, as soon as they have earned a small sum, they strike work and have a merry-making, in which all get much intoxicated, and the carouse continues as long as funds last. They are very ignorant, not being able even to calculate how much work they have done, and trusting altogether to their employer's honesty. They are an open-hearted,

* Manual of the North Arcot district.

good-natured lot, with loose morals, and no restrictions regarding food, but they are proud, and will only eat in the houses of the higher castes, though most Sūdras look down upon them. Polygamy and divorce are freely allowed to men, and women are only restricted from changing partners after having had eighteen. Even this limit is not set to the men."

Women who have had seven husbands are said to be much respected, and their blessing on a bridal pair is greatly praised. There is a common saying that a widow may mount the marriage dais seven times.

In the Census Report, 1871, the Oddēs are described as being "the tank-diggers, well-sinkers, and road-makers of the country who live in detached settlements, building their huts in conical or bee-hive form, with only a low door of entrance. They work in gangs on contract, and every one, except very old and very young, takes a share in the work. The women carry the earth in baskets, while the men use the pick and spade. The babies are usually tied up in cloths, which are suspended, hammock fashion, from the boughs of trees. They are employed largely in the Public Works Department, and in the construction and maintenance of railways. They are rather a fine-looking race, and all that I have come across are Vaishnavites in theory, wearing the trident prominently on their foreheads, arms, and breasts. The women are tall and straight. They eat every description of animal food, and especially pork and field-rats, and all drink spirituous liquors."

Of the Oddēs, the following brief accounts are given in the Nellore, Coimbatore, and Madura Manuals :—

Nellore.—"These people are the tank-diggers. They sometimes engage in the carrying trade, but beyond this, they only move about from place to place

as they have work. The word Voddē or Oddē is said to be a corruption of the Sanskrit Odhra, the name for the country now called Orissa, and the people are ordinarily supposed to have emigrated from the Uriya country. Besides Telugu, they are said to speak a peculiar dialect among themselves; and, if this should turn out to be Uriya, the question might be regarded as settled. The laborious occupation of the men tends to develop their muscles. I have seen some very fine men among the tribe."

Coimbatore.—"Numerous, owing to the hard nature of the subsoil and the immense and increasing number of irrigation wells, which demand the labour of strong men accustomed to the use of the crowbar, pick-axe, and powder. They are black, strong, and of good physique, highly paid, and live on strong meat and drink."

Madura.—"An itinerant caste of tank-diggers and earth-workers. They are Telugus, and are supposed to have come southward in the time of the Nāyyakkans. Possibly Tirumala sent for them to dig out his great teppakulam, and assist in raising gopuras. They are a strong, hard-working class, but also drunken, gluttonous, and vicious. And but little faith can be placed in their most solemn promises. They will take advances from half a dozen employers within a week, and work for none of them, if they can possibly help it."

In Mysore numbers of Oddēs are now permanently settled in the outskirts of large towns, where both sexes find employment as sweepers, etc., in connection with sanitation and conservancy. Some Oddēs are, at the present time (1908), employed at the Mysore manganese mines. The tribe is often found concerting with the Korachas, Koramas, and other predatory classes in



ODDÊS.

committing dacoities and robberies, and it has passed into a proverb that they would rather bear any amount of bodily torture than confess or disclose the truth regarding the crimes attributed to them. Some Oddēs have settled down as agriculturists and contractors, and some are very prosperous. For example, there are a few Oddēs near Kuppam in the North Arcot district, whose credit is so good that any rich merchant would advance them large sums of money. A wealthy Oddē, worth nearly a lakh of rupees, worried my assistant for half an anna, wherewith to purchase some betel leaf. It is recorded by Bishop Whitehead,* in the diary of a tour in the Nizam's Dominions, that, at Khammamett, "the Waddas who have become Christians have for some time past possessed land and cattle of their own, and are well-to-do people. One of the headmen, who was presented to me after service, said that he had 80 acres of land of his own."

Some of the timber work in the Nallamalai hills, in the Kurnool district, is done by Oddēs, who fell trees, and keep bulls for dragging the timber out of the forests. Under the heading "Uppara and Vadde Vandlu," the Rev. J. Cain gives † the following account of the distribution of wages. "The tank-diggers had been paid for their work, and, in apportioning the share of each labourer, a bitter dispute arose because one of the women had not received what she deemed her fair amount. On enquiry it turned out that she was in an interesting condition, and therefore could claim not only her own, but also a share for the expected child."

A legend is current to the effect that, long ago, the Oddēs were ordered to dig a tank, to enable the Dēvatas

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* Madras Dioc. Magazine, April, 1908. † Ind. Ant., VIII, 1879.

and men to obtain water. This was done, and they demanded payment, which was made in the form of a pinch of the sacred ashes of Siva to each workman, in lieu of money. When they reached home, the ashes turned into money, but they were not satisfied with the amount, and clamoured for more. The god, growing angry, cursed them thus: "What you obtain in the forests by digging shall be lost as soon as you reach high ground." Parvati, taking pity on them, asked Siva to give them large sums of money. Whereon Siva, hollowing out a measuring-rod, filled it with varāhans (gold coins), and gave it to the maistry. He also filled a large pumpkin with money, and buried it in a field, where the Oddēs were working. The measuring-rod was pawned by the maistry for toddy. The Oddēs, noticing the raised mound caused by the burying of the pumpkin, left it untouched to show the depth that they had dug. A buffalo, which was grazing in a field close by, exposed the pumpkin, which the Oddēs, not suspecting its contents, sold to a Kōmati.

According to another legend, the Oddēs were employed by God, who had assumed a human form, and was living amongst them. On one occasion, God had to perform a certain ceremony, so he gave the Oddēs an advance of three days' pay, and ordered them not to worry him. This they failed to do, and were accordingly laid under a curse to remain poor for ever.

A further legend is current among the Oddēs to the effect that, when Siva and Parvati were walking one sultry day upon the earth, they got very hot and thirsty. The drops of perspiration which fell from Siva were changed by him into a man with a pick and crowbar, while those falling from Parvati turned into a woman carrying a basket. The man and woman quickly sunk

a well, with the cooling waters of which the god and goddess refreshed themselves, and in gratitude promised the labourers certain gifts, the nature of which is not now known, but neither was satisfied, and both grumbled, which so incensed Siva that he cursed them, and vowed that they and their descendants should live by the sweat of their brows.

Among the Oddēs, the following sayings are current:—

The Oddēs live with their huts on their heads (*i.e.*, low huts), with light made from gathered sticks, on thin conji (gruel), blessing those who give, and cursing those who do not.

Cobras have poison in their fangs, and Oddēs in their tongues.

Though wealth accumulates like a mountain, it soon disappears like mist.

At recent times of census, the following occupational sub-divisions were returned:—Kallu or Rāti (stone-workers) and Mannu (earth-workers), Manti or Bailu (open space), between which there is said to be no intermarriage. The endogamous sub-divisions Nātapūram and Ūrū (village men), Bidāru (wanderers), and Konga (territorial) were also returned. Bēri was given as a sub-caste, and Oddērāzu as a synonym for the caste name. In Ganjam, Bolāsi is said to be a sub-division of the Oddēs. The caste titles are Nāyakan and Boyan. The similarity of the latter word to Boer was fatal, for, at the time of my visit to the Oddēs, the South African war was just over, and they were afraid that I was going to get them transported, to replace the Boers who had been exterminated. Being afraid, too, of my evil eye, they refused to fire a new kiln of bricks for the new club chambers at Coimbatore until I had taken my departure.

It is noted, in the Mysore Census Report, 1891, that "the caste divides itself into two main branches, the Kallu and Mannu Vaddas, between whom there is no social intercourse of any kind, or intermarriage. The former are stone-workers and builders, and more robust than the latter, and are very dexterous in moving large masses of stone by rude and elementary mechanical appliances. They are hardy, and capable of great exertion and endurance. The Kallu Vaddas consider themselves superior to the Mannu Vaddas (earth diggers). Unlike the Kallu Vaddas, the Mannu Vaddas or Bailu Vaddas are a nomadic tribe, squatting wherever they can find any large earthwork, such as deepening and repairing tanks, throwing up embankments, and the like. They are expert navvies, turning out within a given time more hard work than any other labouring class." The Mannu Oddēs eat rats, porcupines, and scaly ant-eaters or pangolins (*Manis pentadactyla*).

Of exogamous septs, the following may be cited :—

Bandollu, rock.
Bochchollu, hairs.
Cheruku, sugarcane.
Enumala, buffalo.
Goddali, axe.
Gampa, basket.
Idakottu, break-down.
Jambu (*Eugenia Jambolana*).
Kōmāli, buffoon.
Santha, a fair.
Sivarātri, a festival.
Manchāla, cot.
Sampangi (*Michelia Champaca*).
Thātichettu, palmyra palm.
Bandāri (*Dodonæa viscosa*).
Dēvala, belonging to god.
Donga, thief.
Malle, jasmine.
Panthipattu, pig-catcher.
Panthikottu, pig-killer.
Upputhōluvaru, salt-carrier.
Pītakāla, dais on which a priest sits.
Thappata, drum.

At the Mysore census, 1901, a few returned gōtras, such as arashina (turmeric), huvvina (flowers), honna (gold), and akshantala (rice grain).

"The women of the Vaddevandlu section of the tank-digger caste," the Rev. J. Cain writes,* "only wear the glass bracelets on the left arm, as, in years gone by (according to their own account), a seller of these bracelets was one day persuading them to buy, and, leaving the bracelets on their left arms, went away, promising to return with a fresh supply for their right arms. As yet he has not re-appeared." But an old woman explained that they have to use their right arm when at work, and if they wore bangles on it, they would frequently get broken.

In some places, tattooing on the forehead with a central vertical line, dots, etc., is universally practiced, because, according to the Oddē, they should bear tattoo marks as a proof of their life on earth (bhulōkam) when they die. Oddēs, calling themselves Pachcha Botlu, are itinerant tattooers in the Ganjam, Vizagapatam and Godāvari districts. While engaged in performing the operation, they sing Telugu songs, to divert the attention of those who are being operated on.

The office of headman, who is known as Yejamānadu, Samayagādu, or Pedda (big) Bōyadu, is hereditary, and disputes, which cannot be settled at a council meeting, are referred to a Balija Dēsai Chetti, whose decision is final. In some cases, the headman is assisted by officers called Chinna (little) Bōyadu, Sankūthi, and Banthari. An Oddē, coming to a place where people are assembled with shoes on, is fined, and described as gurram ekki vachchinavu (having come on a horse). The Oddēs are very particular about touching leather, and beating with shoes brings pollution. Both the beater and the person beaten have to undergo a purificatory ceremony, and

* Ind. Ant., V, 1876.

pay a fine. When in camp at Dimbhum, in the Coimbatore district, I caught hold of a ladle, to show my friend Dr. Rivers what were the fragrant contents of a pot, in which an Oddē woman was cooking the evening meal. On returning from a walk, we heard a great noise proceeding from the Oddē men who had meanwhile returned from work, and found the woman seated apart on a rock, and sobbing. She had been excommunicated, not because I touched the ladle, but because she had afterwards touched the pot. After much arbitration, I paid up the necessary fine, and she was received back into her caste.

When a girl reaches puberty, she is confined in a special hut, in which a piece of iron, margosa leaves (*Melia Azadirachta*), sticks of *Strychnos Nux-vomica*, and the arka plant (*Calotropis gigantea*) are placed, to ward off evil spirits. For fear of these spirits she is not allowed to eat meat, though eggs are permitted. On the seventh day, a fowl is killed, waved in front of the girl, and thrown away. At the end of the period of pollution, the hut is burnt down. Sometimes, when the girl bathes on the first day, a sieve is held over her head, and water poured through it. In some places, on the eleventh day, chicken broth, mixed with arrack (liquor), is administered, in order to make the girl's back and waist strong. The hen, from which the broth is made, must be a black one, and she must have laid eggs for the first time. The flesh is placed in a mortar, pounded to a pulp, and boiled, with the addition of condiments, and finally the arrack.

Both infant and adult marriages are practiced. The marriage ceremony, in its simplest form, is, according to Mr. F. S. Mullaly,* not a tedious one, the bride and

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* Notes on Criminal Classes of the Madras Presidency.

bridegroom walking three times round a stake placed in the ground. In the more elaborate ritual, on the betrothal day, the bride-price, etc., are fixed, and an adjournment is made to the toddy shop. The marriage rites are, as a rule, very simple, but, in some places, the Oddēs have begun to imitate the marriage ceremonies of the Balijas. On the third day, the contracting couple go in procession to a tank, where the bridegroom digs up some mud, and the bride carries three basketfuls thereof to a distance. The following story is narrated in connection with their marriage ceremonies. A certain king wanted an Oddē to dig a tank, which was subsequently called Nidimamidi Koththacheruvu, and promised to pay him in varahālu (gold coins). When the work was completed, the Oddē went to the king for his money, but the king had no measure for measuring out the coins. A person was sent to fetch one, and on his way met a shepherd, who had on his shoulders a small bamboo stick, which could easily be converted into a measure. Taking this stick, he returned to the king, who measured out the coins, which fell short of the amount expected by the Oddēs, who could not pay the debts, which they had contracted. So they threw the money into the tank, saying "Let the tank leak, and the land lie fallow for ever." All were crying on account of their misery and indebtedness. A Balija, coming across them, took pity on them, and gave them half the amount required to discharge their debts. After a time they wanted to marry, and men were sent to bring the bottu (marriage badge), milk-post, musicians, etc. But they did not return, and the Balija suggested the employment of a pestle for the milk-post, a string of black beads for the bottu, and betel leaves and areca nuts instead of gold coins for the oli (bride-price).

The Oddēs are in some places Vaishnavites, in others Saivites, but they also worship minor deities, such as Ellamma, Ankamma, etc., to whom goats and sheep are sacrificed, not with a sword or knife, but by piercing them with a spear or crowbar. Writing at the commencement of the nineteenth century, Buchanan states * that "although the Woddaru pray to Vishnu, and offer sacrifices to Marima, Gungama, Durgama, Putalima, and Mutialima, yet the proper object of worship belonging to the caste is a goddess called Yellama, one of the destroying spirits. The image is carried constantly with their baggage; and in her honour there is an annual feast, which lasts three days. On this occasion they build a shed, under which they place the image, and one of the tribe officiates as priest or pujāri. For these three days offerings of brandy, palm wine, rice, and flowers are made to the idol, and bloody sacrifices are performed before the shed. The Woddas abstain from eating the bodies of the animals sacrificed to their own deity, but eat those which they sacrifice to the other Saktis."

The dead are generally buried. By some Oddēs the corpse is carried to the burial-ground wrapped up in a new cloth, and carried in a dhubati (thick coarse cloth) by four men. On the way to the grave, the corpse is laid on the ground, and rice thrown over its eyes. It is then washed, and the nāmam (Vaishnavite sect mark) painted, or vibūthi (sacred ashes) smeared on the forehead of a man, and kunkumam (coloured powder) on that of a female. Earth is thrown by those assembled into the grave before it is filled in. On the karmāndhiram day, or last day of the death ceremonies, the

* Journey through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar.



ODDĒ HUT.

relations repair to a tank or well outside the village. An effigy is made with mud, to which cooked rice, etc., is offered. Some rice is cooked, and placed on an arka (*Calotropis*) leaf as an offering to the crows. If a married woman has died, the widower cuts through his waist thread, whereas a widow is taken to the water's edge, and sits on a winnow. Her bangles are broken, and the bottu is snapped by her brother. Water is then poured over her head three times through the winnow. After bathing, she goes home, and sits in a room with a lamp, and may see no one till the following morning. She is then taken to one or more temples, and made to pull the tail of a cow three times. The Oddēs of Coimbatore, in the Tamil country, have elaborated both the marriage and funeral ceremonies, and copy those of the Balijas and Vellālas. But they do not call in the assistance of a Brāhman purōhit.

A woman, found guilty of immorality, is said to have to carry a basketful of earth from house to house, before she is re-admitted to the caste.

The following note on a reputed cure for snake poisoning used by Oddēs was communicated to me by Mr. Gustav Haller. "A young boy, who belonged to a gang of Oddēs, was catching rats, and put his hand into a bamboo bush, when a cobra bit him, and clung to his finger when he was drawing his hand out of the bush. I saw the dead snake, which was undoubtedly a cobra. I was told that the boy was in a dying condition, when a man of the same gang said that he would cure him. He applied a brown pill to the wound, to which it stuck without being tied. The man dipped a root into water, and rubbed it on the lad's arm from the shoulder downwards. The arm, which was benumbed, gradually became sensitive, and at last the fingers could move, and the pill

dropped off. The moist root was rubbed on to the boy's tongue and into the corner of the eye before commencing operations. The man said that a used pill is quite efficacious, but should be well washed to get rid of the poison. In the manufacture of the pill, five leaves of a creeper are dried, and ground to powder. The pill must be inserted for nine days between the bark and cambium of a margosa tree (*Melia Azadirachta*) during the new moon, when the sap ascends." The creeper is *Tinospora cordifolia* (gul bēl) and the roots are apparently those of the same climbing shrub. There is a widespread belief that gul bēl growing on a margosa tree is more efficacious as a medicine than that which is found on other kinds of trees.

The insigne of the caste at Conjeeveram is a spade. *

"In the Ceded Districts," Mr. F. S. Mullaly writes, † "some of the Wudders are known as Donga Wuddiwars, or thieving Wudders, from the fact of their having taken to crime as a profession. Those of the tribe who have adopted criminal habits are skilful burglars and inveterate robbers. They are chiefly to be found among the stone Wudder class, who, besides their occupation of building walls, are also skilful stone-cutters. By going about under the pretence of mending grindstones, they obtain much useful information as to the houses to be looted, or parties of travellers to be attacked. In committing a highway robbery or dacoity, they are always armed with stout sticks. Burglary by Wudders may usually be traced to them, if careful observations are made of the breach in the wall. The implement is ordinarily the crowbar used by them in their profession as stone-workers, and the blunt marks of the crowbar

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* J. S. F. Mackenzie. Ind. Ant., IV, 1875. † *Op. cit.*

are, as a rule, noticeable. They will never confess, or implicate another of their fraternity, and, should one of them be accused of a crime, the women are most clamorous, and inflict personal injuries on themselves and their children, to deter the police from doing their duty, and then accuse them of torture. Women and children belonging to criminal gangs are experts in committing grain thefts from kalams or threshing-floors, where they are engaged in harvest time, and also in purloining their neighbours' poultry. Stolen property is seldom found with Wudders. Their receivers are legion, but they especially favour liquor shopkeepers in the vicinity of their encampment. Instances have been known of valuable jewellery being exchanged for a few drams of arrack. In each Wudder community, there is a headman called the Ganga Rāja, and, in the case of criminal gangs of these people, he receives two shares of spoil. Identifiable property is altered at once, many of the Wudders being themselves able to melt gold and silver jewellery, which they dispose of for about one-tenth of the value."

It has been said of the navvies in England that "many persons are quite unaware that the migratory tribe of navvies numbers about 100,000, and moves about from point to point, wherever construction works are going forward, such as railways, harbour, canals, reservoirs and drainage works. Generally the existence of these works is unknown to the public until their completion. They then come into use, but the men who risked their lives to make them are gone nobody knows where. They are public servants, upon whose labours the facilities of modern civilised life largely depend, and surely, therefore, their claim on our sympathies is universal." And these remarks apply

with equal force to the Oddēs, who numbered 498,388 in the Madras Presidency at the census, 1901.

In the Census Report, 1901, Odderāzulu is given as a synonym of Oddē. One of the sections of the Yerukalas is also called Oddē. Vadde (Oddē) Cakali (Tsākala) is recorded, in the Vizagapatam Manual, as the name for those who wash clothes, and carry torches and palanquins.

Oddilu.—The Oddilu are described * by the Rev. J. Cain as principally raftsmen on the Godāvari river, who have raised themselves in life, and call themselves Sishti Karanamalu. He states further that they are Kois (or Koyis) who are regarded as more honourable than any of the others, and have charge of the principal vēlpu (tribal gods).

Ōdhuvar (reader or reciter).—A name for Pandārams, who recite hymns in temples.

Odisi.—A sub-division of Bhondāri.

Odiya.—It is noted, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, that "this is the principal Uriya caste of farmers in Ganjam. Odia and Uriya are different forms of one and the same word, and this caste name simply means a native of the Odia or Uriya country, as Telaga means a man of the Telugu country. In both cases, therefore, we find a number of persons included, who are in reality members of some other caste. The total number of subdivisions of Odia, according to the census schedules, is 146, but a number of these are names of various Uriya castes, and not true sub-divisions. The largest subdivision is Benāito, which is returned by 62,391 persons. The Nunia sub-division, the next largest, was returned by 9,356 individuals." It is further recorded, in the

* Ind. Ant., VIII, 1879.

Census Report, 1901, that Odiya, Oriya, or Uriya "is one of the vaguest terms in the whole of Table XIII (Caste and Tribe). The Odiyas are a race by themselves, split up into many castes. 'Odiya' also often means merely a man who speaks Oriya. The term is, however, so constantly returned by itself without qualification, that Odiya has perforce figured in the tables of all the censuses as a caste. The Odiyas of the hills differ, however, from the Odiyas of the plains, the Odiyas of Ganjam from those of Vizagapatam, and the customs of one muttāh (settlement) from those of the next." Mr. Narasing Doss writes to me that "Odiya literally means an inhabitant of Odissa or Orissa. There is a separate caste called Odiya, with several sub-divisions. They are cultivators by profession. Marriage is infant or adult. They employ Brāhmans at ceremonials. Widows and divorcées are remarried. They eat fish and meat, but not fowls or beef, and do not drink liquor. They burn the dead. Members of the Nāgabonso sept claim to be descendants of Nāgamuni, the serpent rishi."

I gather that there are three main sections among the Odiyas, viz., Benāito, Nuniya, and Baraghoria, of which the first-named rank above the others in the social scale. From them Oriya Brāhmans and Koronos will accept water. The Benāitos and Nuniyas are found all over Ganjam, whereas the Baraghorias are apparently confined to villages round about Aska and Purushothapūr. There are numerous exogamous gōtras within the caste, among which are Nāgasira (cobra), Gonda (rhinoceros), Kochipo (tortoise), and Baraha (boar). The gods of the gōtra should be worshipped at the commencement of any auspicious ceremony. The Odiyas also worship Jagannātha, and Tākurānis (village deities). A number of titles occur in the caste, *e.g.*, Bissoyi, Podhāno, Jenna,

Bariko, Sāhu, Swāyi, Gaudo, Pulleyi, Chando, Dolei, and Torei.

When an unmarried girl is ill, a vow is taken that, if she recovers, she shall be married to the dharma dēvata (sun), which is represented by a brass vessel.

People of mixed origin sometimes call themselves Odiyas, and pass as members of this caste. Some Bhayipuos, for example, who correspond to the Telugu Ādapāpas, call themselves Odiyas or Beniya Odiyas.

Odiya Tōti.—A Tamil synonym for Oriya Haddis employed as scavengers in municipalities in the Tamil country.

Ōjali.—The Ōjali, Vōjali, or Ōzolu are summed up, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as being "Telugu blacksmiths in the Vizagapatam Agency. They eat beef, but are somewhat superior to the Paidis and Mālas in social position. They are also called Mettu Kamsali." It is stated in the Vizagapatam Manual that, during the reign of Chōla Chakravati, the Kamsalas (artisans) claimed to be equal to Brāhmans. This offended the sovereign, and he ordered their destruction. Some only escaped death by taking shelter with people of the 'Ōzu' caste. As an acknowledgment of their gratitude many of the Kamsalas have ōzu affixed to their house-name, *e.g.*, Kattōzu, Lakkōzu.

Okkiliyan.—Okkiliyan is the Tamil synonym for Vakkaliga, the large caste of Canarese cultivators, and the name is derived from okkalu, meaning cultivation or agriculture. In the Madras Census Report, 1901, the Vakkaligas or Okkiliyans are described as "Canarese cultivators, who originally belonged to Mysore, and are found mainly in Madura and Coimbatore. The caste is split up into several sub-divisions, the names of two of which, Nonaba and Gangadikāra, are derived from

former divisions of the Mysore country. Each of these is again split up into totemistic exogamous sections or kūlas, some of which are Chinnada (gold), Belli (silver), Khajjāya (cake), Yemme (buffalo), Alagi (pot), Jōla (chōlum : a millet)." The Vakkaligas say they are descendants of the Ballāl Rājah of Ānēgundi, and that they left their homes in pursuit of more suitable occupation, and settled themselves in Konganād (Coimbatore). The Okkiliyans, whom I have investigated, were settled in the Tamil country in the Coimbatore district, where they were engaged as cultivators, bakers, milk-vendors, bricklayers, merchants, cart-drivers, tailors, cigar manufacturers, and coolies. They returned the following eight endogamous sub-divisions :—

(1) Gangadikāra, or those who lived on the banks of the Ganges.

(2) Gudi, temple.

(3) Kīrē (*Amarantus*), which is largerly cultivated by them.

(4) Kunchu, a tassel or bunch.

(5) Kāmāti, foolish. Said to have abandoned their original occupation of cultivating the land, and adopted the profession of bricklayer.

(6) Gauri, Siva's consort.

(7) Bai.

(8) Sānu.

Like other Canarese castes, the Okkiliyans have exogamous septs (kūttam or kūtta), such as Belli (silver), Kastūri (musk), Pattēgāra (headman), Aruva, Hattianna, etc. By religion they are both Saivites and Vaishnavites. Those of the Aruva sept are all Saivites, and the Hatti sept are Vaishnavites. Intermarriage between Saivites and Vaishnavites is permitted, even though the former be Lingāyats. The Okkiliyans also worship village

deities, and sacrifice goats and fowls to Māgāliamma and Koniamma.

The Kiraikkārans of Coimbatore, whose main occupation is cultivating kirai (*Amarantus*) and other vegetables, are said to be Kempati Okkiliyans, *i.e.*, Okkiliyans who emigrated from Kempampatti in Mysore.

The hereditary headman of the caste, at Coimbatore, is called Pattakāran, who has under him a Chinna (little) Pattakāran. The headman presides over the caste council meetings, settles disputes, and inflicts fines and other forms of punishment. If a person is accused of using coarse language, he is slapped on the cheek by the Chinna Pattakāran. If, during a quarrel, one person beats the other with shoes, he has to purify himself and his house, and feed some of his fellow castemen. The man who has been slippered also has to undergo purificatory ceremony, but has not to stand a feast. In cases of adultery, the guilty persons have to carry a basket of sand on the head round the quarters of the community, accompanied by the Chinna Pattakāran, who beats them with a tamarind switch. In some places, I am informed, there is a headman for the village, called Ūru Goundan, who is subject to the authority of the Nāttu Goundan. Several nādus, each composed of a number of villages, are subject to a Pattakar, who is assisted by a Bandāri. All these offices are hereditary.

When a Gangadikāra girl reaches puberty, her maternal uncle, or his son, constructs a hut of stems of cocoanut leaves, reeds and branches of *Pongamia glabra*. Every day her relations bring her a cloth, fruits, and flowers. On alternate days she is bathed, and dressed in a cloth supplied by the washerwoman. The hut is broken up, and a new one constructed on the third, fifth, and seventh days. During the marriage ceremony, the



VAKKALIGA BRIDE.

bridegroom carries a dagger (katar) with a lime stuck on its tip, and partly covered with a cloth, when he proceeds to the bride's house with a bamboo, new clothes, the tāli (marriage badge), jewels, wrist-thread (kankanam), fruits, cocoanuts, rice, and a new mat, camphor, etc. He must have the dagger with him till the wrist-threads are untied. The barber cuts the nails of the bridegroom. The Pattakāran, or a Brāhman priest, takes round the tāli to be blessed by those assembled, and gives it to the bridegroom, who ties it on the bride's neck. The ends of the cloths of the contracting couple, with betel leaves and areca nuts in them, are tied together, and they link together the little finger of their right hands. They then look at the sky, to see the pole-star, Arundati, who was the wife of the ascetic Vasishta, and the emblem of chastity. The marriage booth has four posts, and the milk-post is made of the milk hedge (*Euphorbia Tirucalli*), to which are tied mango leaves and a wrist-thread. At some Okkiliyan marriages, the caste priest, called Kanigāra (soothsayer), officiates at the tāli-tying ceremony. Very great importance is attached to the linking of the fingers of the bridal couple by the Kanigāra or maternal uncle. Tke dowry is not given at the time of marriage, but only after the birth of a child. For her first confinement, the woman is taken to her parents' home, and, after delivery, is sent back to her husband with the dowry. This is not given before the birth of a child, as, in the event of failure of issue or death of his wife, the husband might claim the property, which might pass to a new family.

Among some Okkiliyans the custom is maintained by which the father of a young boy married to a grown-up girl cohabits with his daughter-in-law until her husband has reached maturity.

A dead person, I was informed at Coimbatore, is buried in a sitting posture, or, if young and unmarried, in a recumbent position. As the funeral procession proceeds on its way to the burial-ground, the relations and friends throw coins, fruits, cakes, cooked rice, etc., on the road, to be picked up by poor people. If the funeral is in high life, they may even throw flowers made of gold or silver, but not images, as some of the higher classes do. At the south end of the grave, a hollow is scooped out for the head and back to rest in. A small quantity of salt is placed on the abdomen, and the grave is filled in. Leaves of the arka plant (*Calotropis gigantea*), or tangēdu (*Cassia auriculata*), are placed in three corners, and a stone is set up over the head. The son, having gone round the grave with a pot of water and a fire-brand, breaks the pot on the stone before he retires. The widow of the deceased breaks her bangles, and throws them on the grave. The son and other mourners bathe, and return home, where they worship a lighted lamp. On the third day, dried twigs of several species of *Ficus* and jāk tree (*Artocarpus integrifolia*), milk, a new cloth, plantains, tender cocoanuts, cheroots, raw rice, betel, etc., required for worship, are taken to the grave. The twigs are burnt, and reduced to ashes, with which, mixed with water, the figure of a human being is made. It is covered with a new cloth, and flowers are thrown on it. Pūja is done to plantains, cocoanut, etc., placed on a plantain leaf, and milk is poured over the figure by relations and friends. The widow breaks her tāli string, and throws it on the figure. The son, and the four bearers who carried the corpse to the grave, are shaved. Each of the bearers is made to stand up, holding a pestle. The barber touches their shoulders with holy grass

dipped in gingelly (*Sesamum*) oil. Raw rice, and other eatables, are sent to the houses of the bearers by the son of the deceased. At night the cloths, turban, and other personal effects of the dead man are worshipped. Pollution is removed on the eleventh day by a Brāhman sprinkling holy water, and the caste people are fed. They perform srādh. By some Okkiliyans, the corpse is, like that of a Lingāyat Badaga, etc., carried to the burial-ground in a structure called tēru kattu, made of a bamboo framework surmounted by a canopy, whereon are placed five brass vessels (kalasam). The structure is decorated with cloths, flags, and plantain trees.

The Morasu Vakkaligas, who sacrifice their fingers, are dealt with separately (*see* Morasu).

Ōlai.—A sub-division of Palli, the members of which wear a ear ornament called ōlai.

Olāro.—A sub-division of Gadaba.

Olēkara.—*See* Vilyakāra.

Olikala (pyre and ashes).—An exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Omanaito.—The Omanaitos or Omaitos are an Oriya cultivating caste, for the following account of which I am indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. According to a tradition, the ancestor of the caste was one Amātya, a minister of Srī Rāma at Ayōdhya. After Rāma had gone to heaven, there was no one to take care of them, and they took to agriculture. The caste is divided into two endogamous sections, called Bodo (big) and Sanno (little). The latter are regarded as illegitimate children of the former by a Bottada, Gaudo, or other woman. The Bodo section is divided into septs, called Sva (parrot), Bhāg (tiger), Kochchimo (tortoise), Nāga (cobra), Sila (stone), Dhūdho (milk), Kumda (*Cucurbita maxima*), and Kukru (dog).

The caste headman is called Bhatha Nāyak, whose office is hereditary. He arranges council meetings for settling social questions, and takes a leading part in excommunicating members of the caste. Like the Gōnds, the Omanaitos cannot tolerate a man suffering from sores, and he is formally excommunicated. To be received back into the caste, he has to give a caste feast, of which the Bhatha Nāyak is the first to partake.

Girls are married before or after puberty. A man claims his paternal aunt's daughter in marriage. As soon as a young man's parents think it is time that he should get married, they set out, with some sweets and jaggery (crude sugar), for the house of the paternal aunt, where the hand of her daughter is asked for. A second visit of a similar nature is made later on, when the marriage is decided on. An auspicious day is fixed by the Dēsāri. A messenger is sent to the house of the bride-elect with some rice, three rupees, a sheep, and a new cloth, which are presented to her parents, who invite the bridegroom and his party to come on the appointed day. On that day, the bridegroom is conducted in procession, sometimes on horseback, to the bride's village. There, in front of her hut, a pandal (booth) has been constructed of eight posts of the sāl tree (*Shorea robusta*), and a central post of the ippa (*Bassia*) tree, to which seven pieces of turmeric and seven mango leaves are tied. At the auspicious moment, the bridegroom is conducted in procession to the booth, and the messenger says aloud to the paternal aunt "The bridegroom has come. Bring the bride quickly." She stands by the side of the bridegroom, and the Dēsāri links together their little fingers, while the women throw rice coloured with turmeric over them. Water, which has been brought from the village stream at early morn, and coloured with turmeric, is

poured over the couple from five pots. They then dress themselves in new cloths presented by their fathers-in-law. A feast is given by the bride's party. On the following day, the bride is conducted to the home of the bridegroom, at the entrance to which they are met by the bridegroom's mother, who sprinkles rice coloured with turmeric over them, and washes their feet with turmeric-water. Liquor is then distributed, and a meal partaken of. The Dēsāri takes seven grains of rice and seven areca nuts and ties them up in the ends of the cloths of the contracting couple. On the following day, a feast is held, and, next day, the parties of the bride and bridegroom throw turmeric-water over each other. All then repair to the stream, and bathe. A feast follows, for which a sheep is killed.

It is noted, in the Gazetteer of the Vizagapatam District, that in the course of an Omanaito wedding there is a free fight, with mud for missiles.

The remarriage of widows is permitted, and a younger brother may marry the widow of his elder brother. Divorce is allowed, and divorcées may marry again.

The Omanaitos worship Tākurāni and Chāmariya Dēvata, as priest of whom a member of the caste officiates. An annual festival is held in the month of Chaitro.

The dead are burnt. Pollution on account of a death in a family lasts for ten days, during which the caste occupation is not carried out, and the mourners are fed by people of another sept. On the eleventh day a feast is held, at which liquor is forbidden.

The caste title is usually Nāyako, but the more prosperous take the title Pātro.

Ondipuli.—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as Telugu-speaking cultivators and cattle-breeders

in the Salem district. The name is sometimes applied to the beggars attached to the Palli caste.

Onnām Parisha (first party).—A section of Elayad.

Onne (*Pterocarpus Marsupium*).—An exogamous sept of Toreyas, who are not allowed to mark their foreheads with the juice which exudes from the trunk of this tree.

Onteddu.—Onteddu or Onti-eddu is the name of a sub-division of Gānigas or Gāndlas, who only use one bullock for their oil-mills.

Opoto.—Opoto or Apoto is the name of the palanquin-bearing section of Gaudos.

Oppamtara.—A title conferred by the Rāja of Cochin on some Nāyars.

Oppanakkāran (trader).—Telugu traders and agriculturists. Recorded as a sub-division of Balija.

Oppomarango (*Achyranthes aspera*).—An exogamous sept of Bhondāri, the members of which may not use the root as a tooth-brush.

Ore.—An honorific title of Nāyars.

Origabhakthudu (saluting devotee).—A class of mendicants, who are said to beg only from Perikes.

Oriya.—Oriya, or Uriya, is a general term for those who speak the Oriya language. At times of census, it has been recorded as a sub-division of various castes, *e.g.*, Sōndi and Dhōbi.

Oruganti.—A sub-division of Kāpu and Mutrācha.

Orunūl (one string).—A sub-division of Mārāns, whose widows do not remarry.

Oshtama.—A corrupt form of the word Vaishnava, applied to Sātānis, who are called by illiterate folk Oishnamāru or Oshtamāru.

Osta.—Recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as the name of a caste of barbers for Muhammadans.

Otattu (tile-makers).—An occupational name for Nāyars, who tile or thatch temples and Brāhman houses.

Ottaisekkan.—The name, indicating those who work their oil-mill with a single bullock, of a sub-division of Vāniyan.

Ottikunda (empty pot).—An exogamous sept of Kamma.

Paccha (green).—An exogamous sept of Kamma. The equivalent Pacchai is a sub-division of Tamil Paraiyans, and of Malaiyālis who have settled on the Pacchaimalais (green hills). Pacchi powāku (green tobacco) occurs as an exogamous sept of Dēvānga. Pacchai Kutti is the name given to Koravas who travel about the country as professional tattooers, the operation of tattooing being known as pricking with green. In like manner, Pacchai Botlu is the name for Oddēs, who are itinerant tattooers in the Ganjam, Vizagapatam, and Godāvari districts.

Pachilia.—A sub-division of Oriya Gaudos.

Pada (fighting).—A sub-division of Nāyar.

Padahāru Mādala (sixteen mādalas).—The name, indicating the amount of the bride-price, of a section of Upparas. A mādala is equal to two rupees. Some say that the name has reference to the modas, or heaps of earth, in which salt was formerly made.

Padaiyāchi.—A synonym or title of Palli or Vanniyan, and Savalakkāran.

Padāl.—A title of headmen of the Bagatas.

Pādam.—Recorded, in the Travancore Census Report, 1901, as a sub-division of Nāyar. Pādamangalam

or Pādamangalakkār is also recorded as a sub-division of Nāyars, who escort processions in temples. Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "Pādamangalam and the Tamil Pādam are recorded as a division of Nāyars, but they are said to be immigrants to Travancore from the Tamil country." Pādam also occurs as an exogamous sept of Moosu Kamma.

Padarti.—A title of pūjāris (priests) in South Canara, and a name by which Stānikas are called.

Padavala (boat).—An exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Padiga Rāju.—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, as the same as Bhatrāzu. The Padiga Rājulu are, however, beggars attached to the Padma Sālēs, and apparently distinct from Bhatrāzus. The name is probably derived from padiga, a kind of vessel, and may bear reference to the vessel which they carry with them on their begging expeditions.

Padma (lotus).—A sub-division of Velama.

Padma Sālē.—The Padma (lotus) Sālēs are a Telugu-speaking caste of weavers, who are scattered all over the Madras Presidency. The majority are engaged in their hereditary occupation, but only the minority possess looms of their own, and they work, for the most part, for the more prosperous owners of hand-looms. As a class they are poor, being addicted to strong drinks, and in the hands of the money-lenders, who take care that their customers always remain in debt to them. Like the Kaikōlans, the Padma Sālēs weave the coarser kinds of cotton cloths, and cannot compete with the Patnūlkārans and Khātrēs in the manufacture of the finer kinds.

The Padma Sālēs have only one gōtra, Markandēya. But, like other Telugu castes, they have a number of

exogamous septs or intipērus, of which the following are examples :—

Bandāri, treasurer.
Bomma, an idol.
Canji, gruel.
Chinthaginjala, tamarind seeds.
Gōrantla, *Lawsonia alba.*
Jinka, gazelle.
Kālava, ditch.
Kāsulu, copper coins.
Kongara, crane.
Kadavala, pots.
Manchi, good.
Nīli, indigo.
Nūkalu, flour of grain or pulse.
Nyāyam, justice.
Ūtla, rope for hanging pots.
Pōthu, male.
Paththi, cotton.
Putta, ant-hill.
Thēlu, scorpion.
Tangedla, *Cassia auriculata.*
Tumma, *Acacia arabica.*
Avari, indigo plant.
Chinnam, gold ?
Gurram, horse.
Geddam, beard.
Kōta, fort.
Mēda, raised mound.
Middala, storeyed house.
Māmidla, mango.
Narāla, nerves.
Pūla, flowers.
Sādhu, quiet or meek.

The Padma Sālēs profess to be Vaishnavites, but some are Saivites. All the families of the exogamous sept Sādhu are said to be lingam-wearing Saivites. In addition to their house-god Venkatēswara, they worship Pulikondla Rangaswāmi, Maremma, Durgamma, Narasappa, Sunkālamma, Urukundhi Vīranna, Gangamma, Kinkiniamma, Mutyālamma, Kālelamma, Ankamma, and Padvetiamma. Their caste deity is Bhāvana Rishi, to whom, in some places, a special temple is dedicated. A festival in honour of this deity is celebrated annually, during which the god and goddess are represented by two decorated pots placed on a model of a tiger (vyagra vāhanam), to which, on the last day of the ceremonial, large quantities of rice and vegetables are offered, which are distributed among the loom-owners, pūjari, headman, fasting celebrants, etc.

The Padma Sālēs belong to the right-hand, and the Dēvāngas to the left-hand faction, and the latter aver

that the Padma Sālēs took away the body of the goddess Chaudēswari, leaving them the head.

Three kinds of beggars are attached to the Padma Sālēs, viz., Sādhana Sūrulu, Padiga Rājulu or Koonapilli vāndlu, and Inaka-mukku Bhatrāzus. Concerning the Sādhana Sūrulu, Buchanan writes as follows.* "The Vaishnavite section of the Samay Sale is called Padma Sālē. The whole Shalay formerly wore the linga, but, a house having been possessed by a devil, and this sect having been called on to cast him out, all their prayers were of no avail. At length ten persons, having thrown aside their linga, and offered up their supplications to Vishnu, they succeeded in expelling the enemy, and ever afterwards they followed the worship of this god, in which they have been initiated by their brethren. The descendants of these men, who are called Sadana Asholu (Sādana Sūrulu), or the celebrated heroes, never work, and, having dedicated themselves to god, live upon the charity of the industrious part of the caste, with whom they disdain to marry."

The Padiga Rājulu are supposed to be the descendants of three persons, Adigadu, Padigadu and Baludu, who sprang from the sweat of Bhāvana Rishi, and the following legend is current concerning the origin of the Padma Sālēs and Padiga Rājulu. At the creation of the world, men were naked, and one Markandēya, who was sixteen years old, was asked to weave cloths. To enable him to do so, he did thapas (penance), and from the sacred fire arose Bhāvana Rishi, bearing a bundle of thread obtained from the lotus which sprang from Vishnu's navel. Bhāvana Rishi made cloths, and presented them to the Dēvatas, and offered a cloth to Bhairava also.

* Journey through Mysore, Canara and Malabar, 1807.

This he refused to accept, as it was the last, and not the first, which is usually rolled up, and kept on the loom. Finding it unsuitable for wearing, Bhairava uttered a curse that the cloths made should wear out in six months. Accordingly, Siva asked Bhāvana to procure him a tiger's skin for wearing. Narada came to the assistance of Bhāvana, and told him to go to Udayagiri, where Bhadrāvati, the daughter of Sūrya, was doing penance to secure Bhāvana as her husband. She promised to secure a skin, if he would marry her. To this he consented, and, in due course, received the tiger's skin. Making the tiger his vāhanam (vehicle), he proceeded to the abode of Siva (Kailāsām), and on his way thither met a Rākshasa, whom he killed in a fight, in the course of which he sweated profusely. From the sweat proceeded Adigadu, Padigadu, and Baludu. When he eventually reached Siva, the tiger, on the sacred ashes being thrown over it, cast its skin, which Siva appropriated. In consequence of this legend, tigers are held in reverence by the Padma Sālēs, who believe that they will not molest them.

The legendary origin of the Padma Sālēs is given as follows in the Baramahal Records.* "In former days, the other sects of weavers used annually to present a piece of cloth to a rishi or saint, named Markandēyulu. One year they omitted to make their offering at the customary period, which neglect enraged the rishi, who performed a yāga or sacrifice of fire, and, by the power of mantras or prayers, he caused a man to spring up out of the fire of the sacrifice, and called him Padma Saliwarlu, and directed him to weave a piece of cloth for his use. This he did, and presented

* Section III. Inhabitants. Madras Government Press, 1907.

it to the rishi, saying 'Oh! Swāmi, who is thy servant to worship, and how is he to obtain moksham or admittance to the presence of the Supreme?' The rishi answered 'Pay adoration to me, and thou wilt obtain moksham.'"

The office of headman (Setti or Gaudu) is hereditary. The headman has under him an assistant, called Ummidi Setti or Ganumukhi, who is the caste messenger, and is exempt from the various subscriptions for temple festivals, etc.

When a girl reaches puberty, she is forbidden to eat meat or *Amarantus* during the period of ceremonial pollution. In settling the preliminaries of a marriage, a Brāhman purōhit takes part. With some Padma Sālēs it is etiquette not to give direct answers when a marriage is being fixed up. For example, those who have come to seek the hand of a girl say "We have come for a sumptuous meal," to which the girl's parents, if consenting to the match, will reply "We are ready to feed you. You are our near relations." The marriage rites are a blend of the Canarese and Telugu types. In the Ceded districts, the bride is conveyed to the house of the bridegroom, seated on a bull, after worship has been done to Hanumān. As she enters the house, a cocoanut is waved, and thrown on the ground. She then bathes in an enclosure with four posts, round which cotton thread has been wound nine times. Wrist-threads of cotton and wool are tied on the bride and bridegroom. The bottu (marriage badge) is tied round the bride's neck, and she stands on a pile of cholum (*Sorghum vulgare*: millet) on the floor or in a basket. The bridegroom stands on a mill-stone. While the bottu is being tied, a screen is interposed between the contracting couple. The bride's nose-screw ornament is dropped into a plate of milk,

from which she has to pick it out five times. Towards evening, the bridal couple go in procession through the streets, and to the temple, if there is one. On their return to the house, the bridegroom picks up the bride, and dances for a short time before entering. This ceremony is called dēga-āta, and is performed by several Telugu castes.

Some Padma Sālēs bury their dead in the usual manner, others, like the Lingāyats, in a sitting posture. It is customary, in some places, to offer up a fowl to the corpse before it is removed from the house, and, if a death occurs on a Saturday or Sunday, a fowl is tied to the bier, and burnt with the corpse. This is done in the belief that otherwise another death would very soon take place. The Tamilians, in like manner, have a proverb "A Saturday corpse will not go alone." On the way to the burial-ground, the corpse is laid down, and water poured into the mouth. The son takes a pot of water round the grave, and holes are made in it by the Ummidi Setti, through which the water trickles out. On the fifth day, a sheep is killed, and eaten. During the evening the Sātāni comes, and, after doing pūja (worship), gives the relatives of the deceased sacred arrack (liquor) in lieu of holy water (thirtham) and meat, for which he receives payment. On the last day of the death ceremonies (karmāndiram), the Sātāni again comes with arrack, and, according to a note before me, all get drunk. (*See* Sālē.)

Pagadāla (trader in coral).—A sub-division or exogamous sept of Balija and Kavarai. The Pagadāla Balijas of the Vizagapatam district are described as dealing in coral and pearls. Pagada Mūkara (coral nose-ring) has been returned as a sub-division of Kamma.

Pagati Vēsham.—A class of Telugu beggars, who put on disguises (vēsham) while begging.* At the annual festival at Tirupati in honour of the goddess Gangamma, custom requires the people to appear in a different disguise every morning and evening. These disguises include those of a Bairāgi, serpent, etc.†

Paguththan.—A title of Sembadavan.

Paida (gold or money).—An exogamous sept of Māla. The equivalent Paidam occurs as an exogamous sept of Dēvānga.

Paidi.—The Paidis are summed up, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, as "a class of agricultural labourers and weavers, found in the Vizagapatam district. Some of them are employed as servants and village watchmen. They are closely akin to the Pānos and Dōmbos of the hills, and Mālas of the plains. They speak a corrupt dialect of Uriya." In the Census Report, 1901, Kangara (servant) is recorded as a synonym for Paidi.

For the following note on the Paidis of the Vizagapatam district, I am mainly indebted to Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. There is a great deal of confusion concerning this caste, and the general impression seems to be that it is the same as Dōmb and Pāno. I am informed that the same man would be called Paidi by Telugus, Dōmb by the Savaras, and Pāno by the Konds. In the interior of the Jeypore Agency tracts the Dōmbs and Paidis both repudiate the suggestion that they are connected with each other. The Paidis, in some places, claim to belong to the Vālmīki kulam, and to be descended from Vālmīki, the author of the Rāmāyana. A similar descent, it may be noted, is claimed by the Bōyas. In the Vizagapatam Manual, the Paidimālalu or Paidi Mālas (hill Mālas) are

* Madras Census Report, 1901.

† *See* Manual of the North Arcot district, I, 187.

described as cultivating land, serving as servants and village watchmen, and spinning cotton. It is said that they will not eat food, which has been seen by Kōmatis. The Paidis stoutly deny their connection with the Mālas.

When a Paidi girl reaches puberty, she is kept under pollution for a varying number of days, and, on the last day, a Mādiga is summoned, who cuts her finger and toe nails, after which she bathes. Girls are married either before or after puberty. The mēnarikam custom is in force, according to which a man should marry his maternal uncle's daughter. If he does so, the bride-price (vōli) is fixed at five rupees; otherwise it is ten rupees. The marriage ceremonies last over four days, and are of the low-country Telugu type. The remarriage of widows and divorce are permitted.

The Paidis are Vaishnavites, and sing songs in praise of Rāma during the month Karthīka (November-December). Each family feeds a few of the castemen at least once during that month. They also observe the Sankramanam festival, at which they usually wear new clothes. The dead are either burnt or buried, and the chinna (small) and pedda rōzu (big day) death ceremonies are observed.

Some Paidis are cultivators, but a large number are prosperous traders, buying up the hill produce, and bringing it to the low-country, where it is sold at markets. Their children study English in the hill schools. The caste titles are Anna and Ayya.

Some time ago some prisoners, who called themselves Billaikāvu (cat-eaters), were confined in the Vizagapatam jail. I am informed that these people are Māla Paidis, who eat cat flesh.

The following note refers to the Paidis who live in the southern part of Ganjam. Some have settled as

watchmen, or in other capacities, among the Savaras, whose language they speak in addition to their own. In their marriage ceremonies, they conform to the Telugu type, with certain variations adopted from the Oriya ceremonial. On the first day, a pandal (booth) is set up, and supported on twelve posts. A feast is given to males during the day, and to females at night. Like the Oriya Dandāsis, they bring water from seven houses of members of castes superior to their own. The auspicious time for tying the pushte (gold marriage badge) on the following day is fixed so as to fall during the night. At the appointed time, the bridegroom rushes into the house of the bride, and the contracting couple throw rice over each other. Taking the bride by the hand, the bridegroom conducts her to the pandal, wherein they take their seats on the dais. The bride should be seated before the bridegroom, and there is a mock struggle to prevent this, and to secure first place for the bridegroom. He then ties a mokkuto (chaplet) on the bride's forehead, a thread on her wrist, and the pushte on her neck. After this has been done, the couple bathe with the water already referred to, and once more come to the dais, where a small quantity of rice, sufficient to fill a measure called adda, is placed before them. Some amusement is derived from the bride abstracting a portion of the rice, so that, when the bridegroom measures it, there is less than there should be. The marriage ceremonies conclude on the third day with offerings to ancestors, and distribution of presents to the newly married couple.

The death ceremonies are based on the Oriya type. On the day after death, the funeral pyre is extinguished, and the ashes are thrown on to a tree or an ant-hill. As they are being borne thither, the priest asks the man

who carries them what has become of the dead person, and he is expected to reply that he has gone to Kāsi (Benares) or Jagannātham. A cloth is spread on the spot where the corpse was burnt, and offerings of food are placed on it. On the fourth day, a pig is killed and cooked. Before being cooked, one of the legs is hung up near the spot where the deceased breathed his last. Death pollution is got rid of by touching oil and turmeric, and the ceremonies conclude with a feast. An annual offering of food is made, in the month of November, to ancestors, unless a death takes place in the family during this month.

The Ganjam Paidis worship the Tākurānis (village deities), and sacrifice goats and sheep at local temples. As they are a polluting caste, they stand at a distance opposite the entrance to the temple, and, before they retire, take a pinch or two of earth. This, on their return home, they place on a cloth spread on a spot which has been cleansed, and set before it the various articles which have been prepared as offerings to the Tākurāni. When a Paidi is seriously ill, a male or female sorcerer (Bejjo or Bejjano) is consulted. A square, divided into sixteen compartments, is drawn on the floor with rice-flour. In each compartment are placed a leaf, cup of *Butea frondosa*, a quarter-anna piece, and some food. Seven small bows and arrows are set up in front thereof in two lines. On one side of the square a big cup, filled with food, is placed. A fowl is sacrificed, and its blood poured thrice round this cup. Then, placing water in a vessel near the cup, the sorcerer or sorceress throws into it a grain of rice, giving out at the same time the name of some god or goddess. If the rice sinks, it is believed that the illness is caused by the anger of the deity, whose name has been mentioned.

If the rice floats, the names of various deities are called out, until a grain sinks.

It is recorded * that, in the Parvatipūr country of the Vizagapatam district, "the Paidis (Paidi Mālas) do most of the crime, and often commit dacoities on the roads. Like the Konda Doras, they have induced some of the people to employ watchmen of their caste as the price of immunity from theft. They are connected with the Dombus of the Rāyagada and Gunupur tāluks, who are even worse."

Paik.—It is noted by Yule and Burnell,† under the heading Pyke or Paik, that "Wilson gives only one original of the term so expressed in Anglo-Indian speech. He writes 'Pāik or Pāyik, corruptly Pyke, Hind., etc. (from S. padātika), Pāik or Pāyak, Mar., a footman, an armed attendant, an inferior police and revenue officer, a messenger, a courier, a village watchman. In Cuttack the Pāiks formerly constituted a local militia, holding land of the Zamindars or Rājas by the tenure of military service.' But it seems clear to us that there are here two terms rolled together: (*a*) Pers. Paik, a foot-runner or courier; (*b*) Hind. pāīk and pāyik (also Mahr.) from Skt. padātika, and padika, a foot-soldier."

In the Madras Census Report, 1891, Paiko is defined as "rather an occupational than a caste name. It means a foot-soldier, and is used to denote the retainers of the Uriya Chiefs of Ganjam and Vizagapatam. These men were granted lands on feudal tenure, and belonged to various castes. They are now ordinary agriculturists. Some are employed in the police, and as peons in the various public departments." In the records relating to human sacrifice and infanticide, 1854, the Paiks are

* Gazetteer of the Vizagapatam district.

† Hobson-Jobson.

referred to as matchlock men, by whom the Konds and Gonds are kept in abject servitude. In the Vizagapatam Manual, 1869, various castes are referred to as being "all paiks or fighting men. Formerly they were a very numerous body, but their numbers are much diminished now, that is as fighting men, for the old army used to be paid, some in money, and some in grants of land. Now there are very few paiks kept up as fighting men; those discharged from service have taken to trading with the coast, and to cultivating their pieces of land. The fort at Kōtapād on the Bustar frontier always had a standing garrison of several hundred paiks. They are gradually being disbanded since we have put police there. The men are a fine race, brave, and capital shots with the matchlock." Paiko has been recorded, at times of census, as a synonym or sub-division of Rona. And Paikarāyi occurs as a title of Badhōyis.

Paiki.—A division of Toda.

Pailmān.—Pailmān or Pailwān has been described * as "an occupational term meaning a wrestler, used by all classes following the occupation, whether they are Hindus or Musalmans. The Hindus among them are usually Gollas or Jettis." In the Telugu country, the Pailmāns wrestle, and perform various mountebank, conjuring, and juggling feats. A wandering troupe of Marātha Pailwāns performed before me various stick-exercises, acrobatic and contortionist feats, and balancing feats on a bamboo pole supported in the kamerband (belly-band) of a veteran member of the troupe. The performance wound up with gymnastics on a lofty pole kept erect by means of ropes tied to casual trees and tent-pegs, and surmounted by a pliant bamboo, on which the

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* Madras Census Report, 1901.

performer swung and balanced himself while playing a drum, or supporting a pile of earthen pots surmounted by a brass vessel on his head. The entertainment took place amid the music of drum and clarionet, and the patter of one of the troupe, the performers playing the drum in the waits between their turns.

Painda.—A synonym of Paidi.

Pākanāti (eastern territory).—A sub-division of various Telugu classes, *e.g.*, Balija, Golla, Kamsala, Kāpu, Māla, and Tsākala.

Paki.—Recorded by the Rev. J. Cain * as a sweeper caste in the Godāvari district, members of which have come from the neighbourhood of Vizagapatam, and are great sticklers for their caste rules.

Pakinādu.—A territorial sub-division of Kamsalas and other Telugu castes, corresponding to Pākanāti.

Pakirithi.—Pakirithi or Parigiri, meaning Vaishnavite, is a sub-division of Besthas, who, on ceremonial occasions, wear the Vaishnava sect mark.

Pāl (milk).—Pāl or Pāla has been recorded as a sub-division of Idaiyan and Kurumba, and an exogamous sept of Māla. (*See* Hālu.)

Palakala (planks).—An exogamous sept of Kamma.

Pālamala.—Pālama is recorded as a sub-division of the Kānikars of Travancore and Palamalathillom, said to denote the mountain with trees with milky juice, as an exogamous sept of the same tribe.

Pālāvili.—A gōtra of Gollas, who are not allowed to erect pālāvili, or small booths inside the house for the purpose of worship.

Pālayakkāran.—*See* Mutrācha.

Paligiri.—A sub-division of Mutrācha.

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* Ind. Ant., VIII, 1879.

Palissa (shield) **Kollan.**—A class of Kollans in Malabar, who make leather shields. It is recorded, in the Gazetteer of Malabar, that, at the tāli-kettu ceremony, "the girl and manavālan (bridegroom) go to the tank on the last day of the ceremony. The girl, standing in the tank, ducks her whole body under water thrice. As she does so for the third time, a pāndibali or triangular platter made of cocoanut fronds and pieces of plantain stem and leaf plaited together and adorned with five lighted wicks, is thrown over her into the water, and cut in half as it floats by an enangan, who sings a song called Kālikkakam. Lastly, the girl chops in two a cocoanut placed on the bank. She aims two blows at it, and failure to sever it with a third is considered inauspicious. Among Palissa Kollans and some other castes, the lucky dip ceremony is performed on the last day (called nālām kalyānam or fourth marriage). An enangan, drawing out the packets at random, distributes them to the manavālan, the girl, and himself in turn. It is lucky for the manavālan to get the gold, and the girl the silver. A significant finish to the ceremony in the form of a symbolical divorce is not infrequent in South Malabar at all events. Thus, among the Palissa Kollans the manavālan takes a piece of thread from his mundu (cloth), and gives it, saying 'Here is your sister's acchāram' to the girl's brother, who breaks it in two and puffs it towards him. In other cases, the manavālan gives the girl a cloth on the first day, and cuts it in two, giving her one half on the last; or the manavālan and an enangan of the girl hold opposite ends of a cloth, which the manavālan cuts and tears in two, and then gives both pieces to the girl."

Paliyans of Madura and Tinnevelly. In a note on the Malai (hill) Paliyans of the Madura district, the

Rev. J. E. Tracy writes as follows. "I went to their village at the foot of the Periyar hills, and can testify to their being the most abject, hopeless, and unpromising specimens of humanity that I have ever seen. There were about forty of them in the little settlement, which was situated in a lovely spot. A stream of pure water was flowing within a few feet of their huts, and yet they were as foul and filthy in their personal appearance as if they were mere animals, and very unclean ones. Rich land that produced a luxuriant crop of rank reeds was all around them, and, with a little exertion on their part, might have been abundantly irrigated, and produced continuous crops of grain. Yet they lived entirely on nuts and roots, and various kinds of gum that they gathered in the forest on the slopes of the hills above their settlement. Only two of the community had ever been more than seven miles away from their village into the open country below them. Their huts were built entirely of grass, and consisted of only one room each, and that open at the ends. The chief man of the community was an old man with white hair. His distinctive privilege was that he was allowed to sleep between two fires at night, while no one else was allowed to have but one—a distinction that they were very complaisant about, perhaps because with the distinction was the accompanying obligation to see that the community's fire never went out. As he was also the only man in the community who was allowed to have two wives, I inferred that he delegated to them the privilege of looking after the fires, while he did the sleeping, whereas, in other families, the man and wife had to take turn and turn about to see that the fire had not to be re-lighted in the morning. They were as ignorant as they were filthy. They had no place of worship, but seemed to

agree that the demons of the forest around them were the only beings that they had to fear besides the Forest Department. They were barely clothed, their rags being held about them, in one or two cases, with girdles of twisted grass. They had much the same appearance that many a famine subject presented in the famine of 1877, but they seemed to have had no better times to look back upon, and hence took their condition as a matter of course. The forest had been their home from time immemorial. Yet the forest seemed to have taught them nothing more than it might have been supposed to have taught the prowling jackal or the laughing hyæna. There were no domesticated animals about their place: strange to say, not even a pariah dog. They appeared to have no idea of hunting, any more than they had of agriculture. And, as for any ideas of the beauty or solemnity of the place that they had selected as their village site, they were as innocent of such things as they were of the beauties of Robert Browning's verse."

In a note written in 1817, Mr. T. Turnbull states that the Madura Pulliers "are never seen unless when they come down to travellers to crave a piece of tobacco or a rag of cloth, for which they have a great predilection. The women are said to lay their infants on warm ashes after delivery, as a substitute for warm clothing and beds."

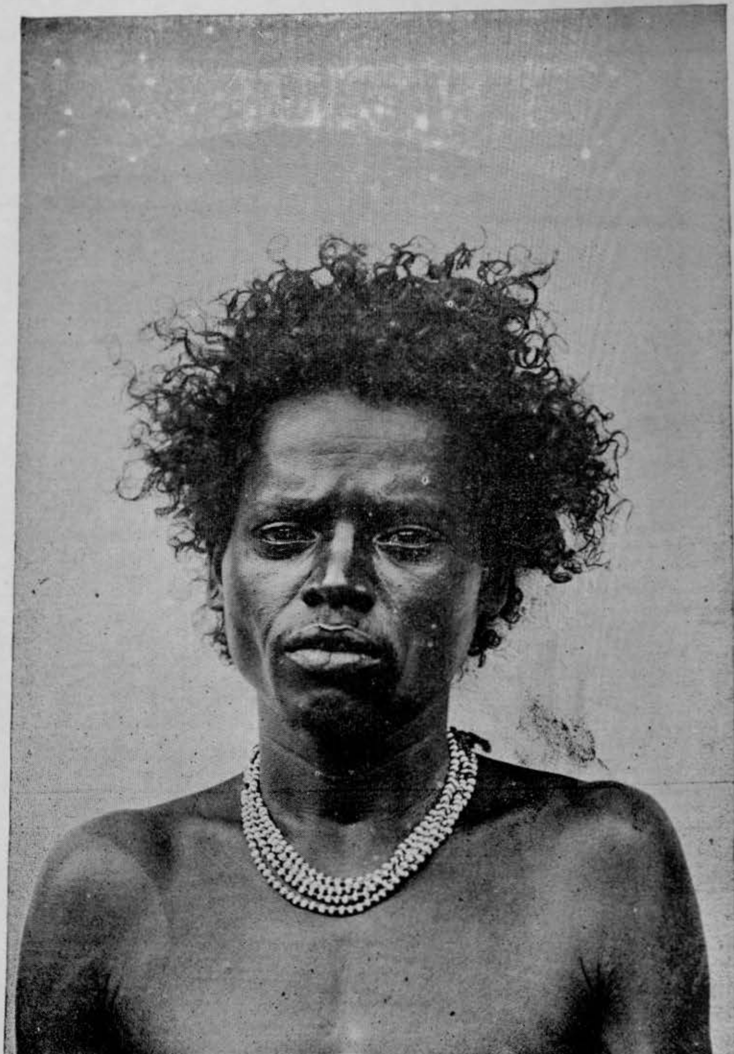
The Palayans, or Pulleer, are described by General Burton * as "good trackers, and many of them carried bows and arrows, and a few even possessed matchlocks. I met one of these villagers going out on a sporting excursion. He had on his head a great chatty (earthen pot) full of water, and an old brass-bound matchlock.

* An Indian Olio.

It was the height of the dry season. He was taking water to a hollow in a rock, which he kept carefully replenished, and then ensconced himself in a clump of bushes hard by, and waited all day, if necessary, with true native patience, for hog, deer, or pea-fowl to approach his ambush."

In the Madura Manual, it is noted that "the Poleiyans have always been the prædial slaves of the Kunuvans. According to the survey account, they are the aborigines of the Palni hills. The marriage ceremony consists merely of a declaration of consent made by both parties at a feast, to which all their relatives are invited. As soon as a case of small-pox occurs in one of their villages, a cordon is drawn round it, and access to other villages is denied to all the inhabitants of the infected locality, who at once desert their homes, and camp out for a sufficiently long period. The individual attacked is left to his fate, and no medicine is exhibited to him, as it is supposed that the malady is brought on solely by the just displeasure of the gods. They bury their dead."

The Paliyans are described, in the Gazetteer of the Madura district, as a "very backward caste, who reside in small scattered parties amid the jungles of the Upper Palnis and the Varushanād valley. They speak Tamil with a peculiar intonation, which renders it scarcely intelligible. They are much less civilised than the Pulaiyans, but do not eat beef, and consequently carry no pollution. They sometimes build themselves grass huts, but often they live on platforms up trees, in caves, or under rocks. Their clothes are of the scantiest and dirtiest, and are sometimes eked out with grass or leaves. They live upon roots (yams), leaves, and honey. They cook the roots by putting them into a pit in the ground,



PALIYAN.

heaping wood upon them, and lighting it. The fire is usually kept burning all night as a protection against wild beasts, and it is often the only sign of the presence of the Paliyans in a jungle, for they are shy folk, who avoid other people. They make fire with quartz and steel, using the floss of the silk-cotton tree as tinder. Weddings are conducted without ceremonies, the understanding being that the man shall collect food, and the woman cook it. When one of them dies, the rest leave the body as it is, and avoid the spot for some months."

A detailed account of the Paliyans of the Palni hills by the Rev. F. Dahmen has recently been published,* to which I am indebted for the following information. "The Paliyans are a nomadic tribe, who for the most part rove in small parties through the jungle-clad gorges that fringe the Upper Palnis plateau. There they maintain themselves mostly on the products of the chase and on roots (yams, etc.), leaves and wild fruits (*e.g.*, of the wild date tree), at times also by hiring their labour to the Kunnuvan or Mannadi villagers. The find of a bee-hive in the hollow of some tree is a veritable feast for them. No sooner have they smoked the bees out than they greedily snatch at the combs, and ravenously devour them on the spot, with wax, grubs, and all. Against ailments the Paliyans have their own remedies: in fact, some Paliyans have made a name for themselves by their knowledge of the medicinal properties of herbs and roots. Thus, for instance, they make from certain roots (periya uri katti vēr) a white powder known as a very effective purgative. Against snake-bite they always carry with them certain leaves (naru valli vēr), which they hold to be a very efficient antidote. As soon as

* Anthropos, III, 1908.

one of them is bitten, he chews these, and also applies them to the wound. Patience and cunning above all are required in their hunting-methods. One of their devices, used for big game, *e.g.*, against the sambar (deer), or against the boar, consists in digging pitfalls, carefully covered up with twigs and leaves. On the animal being entrapped, it is dispatched with clubs or the aruvāl (sickle). Another means consists in arranging a heap of big stones on a kind of platform, one end of which is made to rest on higher ground, the other skilfully equipoised by a stick resting on a fork, where it remains fixed by means of strong twine so disposed that the least movement makes the lever-like stick on the fork fly off, while the platform and the stones come rapidly down with a crash. The string which secures the lever is so arranged as to unloose itself at the least touch, and the intended victim can hardly taste the food that serves for bait without bringing the platform with all its weight down upon itself. Similar traps, but on a smaller scale, are used to catch smaller animals : hares, wild fowl, etc. Flying squirrels are smoked out of the hollows of trees, and porcupines out of their burrows, and then captured or clubbed to death on their coming out. The first drops of blood of any animal the Paliyans kill are offered to their god. A good catch is a great boon for the famished Paliyan. The meat obtained therefrom must be divided between all the families of the settlement. The skins, if valuable, are preserved to barter for the little commodities they may stand in need of, or to give as a tribute to their chief. One of their methods for procuring fish consists in throwing the leaves of a creeper called in Tamil karungakodi, after rubbing them, into the water. Soon the fish is seen floating on the surface. Rough fashioned hooks are also used. When not engaged on some

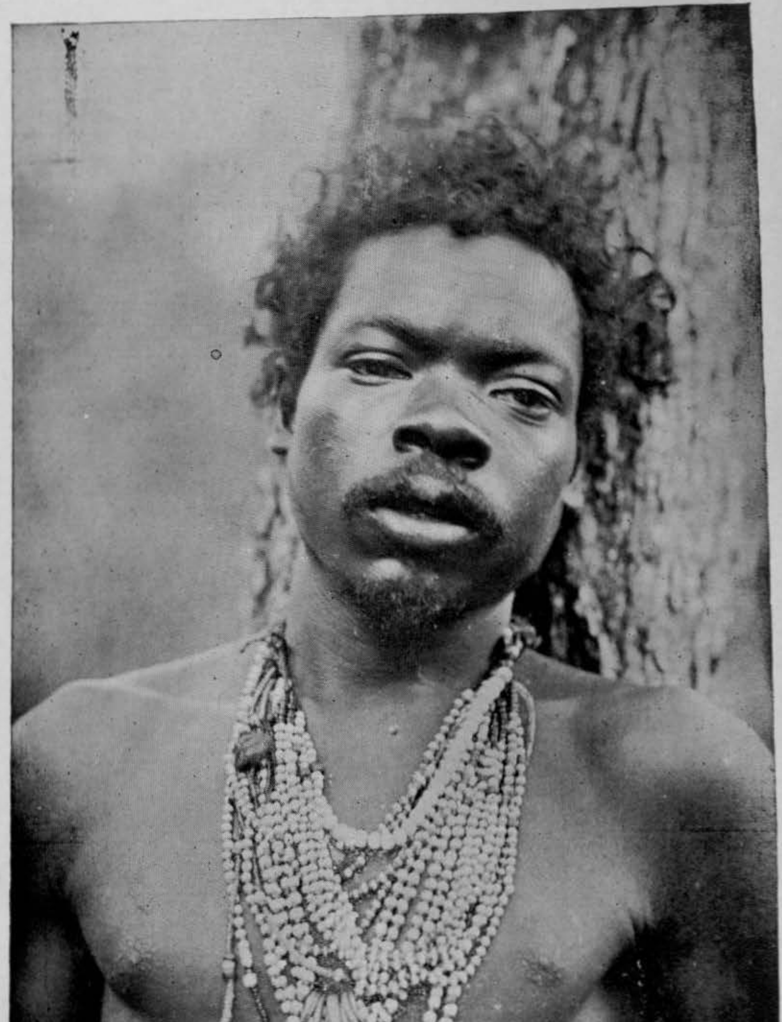
expedition, or not working for hire, the Paliyans at times occupy themselves in the fabrication of small bird-cages, or in weaving a rough kind of mat, or in basket-making. The small nicknacks they turn out are made according to rather ingenious patterns, and partly coloured with red and green vegetable dyes. These, with the skins of animals, and the odoriferous resin collected from the dammer tree, are about the only articles which they barter or sell to the inhabitants of the plains, or to the Mannadis."

Concerning the religion and superstitions of the Paliyans, the Rev. F. Dahmen writes as follows. "The principal religious ceremony takes place about the beginning of March. Mayāndi (the god) is usually represented by a stone, preferably one to which nature has given some curious shape, the serpent form being especially valued. I said 'represented,' for, according to our Paliyans, the stone itself is not the god, who is supposed to live somewhere, they do not exactly know where. The stone that represents him has its shrine at the foot of a tree, or is simply sheltered by a small thatched covering. There, on the appointed day, the Paliyans gather before sunrise. Fire is made in a hole in front of the sacred stone, a fine cock brought in, decapitated amidst the music of horn and drum and the blood made to drip on the fire. The head of the fowl ought to be severed at one blow, as this is a sign of the satisfaction of the god for the past, and of further protection for the future. Should the head still hang, this would be held a bad omen, foreboding calamities for the year ensuing. The instrument used in this sacred operation is the aruvāl, but the sacrificial aruvāl cannot be used but for this holy purpose. Powers of witchcraft and magic are attributed to the Paliyans by other castes, and probably

believed in by themselves. The following device adopted by them to protect themselves from the attacks of wild animals, the panther in particular, may be given as an illustration. Four jackals' tails are planted in four different spots, chosen so as to include the area within which they wish to be safe from the claws of the brute. This is deemed protection enough: though panthers should enter the magic square, they could do the Paliyans no harm; their mouths are locked." It is noted by the Rev. F. Dahmen that Paliyans sometimes go on a pilgrimage to the Hindu shrine of Subrahmaniyam at Palni.

Writing concerning the Paliyans who live on the Travancore frontier near Shenkotta, Mr. G. F. D'Penha states* that they account for their origin by saying that, at some very remote period, an Eluvan took refuge during a famine in the hills, and there took to wife a Palliyar woman, and that the Palliyars are descended from these two. "The Palliyar," he continues, "is just a shade lower than the Eluvan. He is permitted to enter the houses of Eluvans, Elavanians (betel-growers), and even of Maravars, and in the hills, where the rigour of the social code is relaxed to suit circumstances, the higher castes mentioned will even drink water given by Palliyars, and eat roots cooked by them. The Palliyars regard sylvan deities with great veneration. Kurupuswāmi is the tribe's tutelary god, and, when a great haul of wild honey is made, offerings are given at some shrine. They pretend to be followers of Siva, and always attend the Adi Amavasai ceremonies at Courtallum. The Palliyar cultivates nothing, not even a sweet potato. He keeps no animal, except a stray dog or two. An axe, a knife, and a pot are all the impedimenta he carries. An

* Ind. Ant., XXX, 1902.



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expert honey-hunter, he will risk his neck climbing lofty precipices or precipitous cliffs. A species of sago-palm furnishes him with a glairy glutinous fluid on which he thrives, and such small animals as the iguana (*Varanus*), the tortoise, and the larvæ of hives are never-failing luxuries."

The Paliyans, whom I investigated in North Tinnevelly, were living in the jungles near the base of the mountains, in small isolated communities separated from each other by a distance of several miles. They speak Tamil with a peculiar intonation, which recalls to mind the Irulas. They are wholly illiterate, and only a few can count up to ten. A woman has been known to forget her own name. At a marriage, the father, taking the hand of the bride, and putting it into that of the bridegroom, says "I give this girl to you. Give her roots and leaves, and protect her." The value of a bride or bridegroom depends very much on the quantity of roots, etc., which he or she can collect. When a widow does not remarry, the males of the community supply her with roots and other products of the jungle. Marriages are, as a rule, contracted within the settlement, and complications occasionally occur owing to the absence of a girl of suitable age for a young man. Indeed, in one settlement I came across two brothers, who had for this reason resorted to the adelphous form of polyandry. It would be interesting to note hereafter if this custom, thus casually introduced, becomes established in the tribe. As an exception to the rule of marriage within the settlement, it was noted that a party of Paliyans had wandered from the Gandamanaikanūr forests to the jungle of Ayanarkoil, and there intermarried with the members of the local tribe, with which they became incorporated. The Paliyans admit members

of other castes into their ranks. A case was narrated to me, in which a Maravan cohabited for some time with a Paliya woman, who bore children by him. In this way is the purity of type among the jungle tribes lost as the result of civilisation, and their nasal index reduced from platyrhine to mesorhine dimensions.

The Tinnevelly Paliyans say that Valli, the wife of the god Subramaniya, was a Paliyan woman. As they carry no pollution, they are sometimes employed, in return for food, as night watchmen at the Vaishnavite temple known as Azhagar Koil at the base of the hills. They collect for the Forest Department minor produce in the form of root-bark of *Ventilago madraspatana* and *Anisochilus carnosus*, the fruit of *Terminalia Chebula* (myrabolams), honey, bees-wax, etc., which are handed over to a contractor in exchange for rice, tobacco, betel leaves and nuts, chillies, tamarinds and salt. The food thus earned as wages is supplemented by yams (tubers of *Dioscorea*) and roots, which are dug up with a digging-stick, and forest fruits. They implicitly obey the contractor, and it was mainly through his influence that I was enabled to interview them, and measure their bodies, in return for a banquet, whereof they partook seated on the grass in two semicircles, the men in front and women in the rear, and eating off teak leaf plates piled high with rice and vegetables. Though the prodigious mass of food provided was greedily devoured till considerable abdominal distension was visible, dissatisfaction was expressed because it included no meat (mutton), and I had not brought new loin-cloths for them. They laughed, however, when I expressed a hope that they would abandon their dirty cloths, turkey-red turbans and European bead necklaces, and revert to the primitive leafy garment of their forbears. A struggle ensued for

the limited supply of sandal paste, with which a group of men smeared their bodies, in imitation of the higher classes, before they were photographed. A feast given to the Paliyans by some missionaries was marred at the outset by the unfortunate circumstance that betel and tobacco were placed by the side of the food, these articles being of evil omen as they are placed in the grave with the dead. A question whether they eat beef produced marked displeasure, and even roused an apathetic old woman to grunt "Your other questions are fair. You have no right to ask that." If a Paliyan happens to come across the carcase of a cow or buffalo near a stream, it is abandoned, and not approached for a long time. Leather they absolutely refuse to touch, and one of them declined to carry my camera box, because he detected that it had a leather strap.

They make fire with a quartz strike-a-light and steel and the floss of the silk-cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*). They have no means of catching or killing animals, birds, or fish with nets, traps, or weapons, but, if they come across the carcase of a goat or deer in the forest, they will roast and eat it. They catch "vermin" (presumably field rats) by smoking them out of their holes, or digging them out with their digging-sticks. Crabs are caught for eating by children, by letting a string with a piece of cloth tied to the end down the hole, and lifting it out thereof when the crab seizes hold of the cloth with its claws. Of wild beasts they are not afraid, and scare them away by screaming, clapping the hands, and rolling down stones into the valleys. I saw one man, who had been badly mauled by a tiger on the buttock and thigh when he was asleep with his wife and child in a cave. During the dry season they live in natural caves and crevices in rocks, but, if these leak

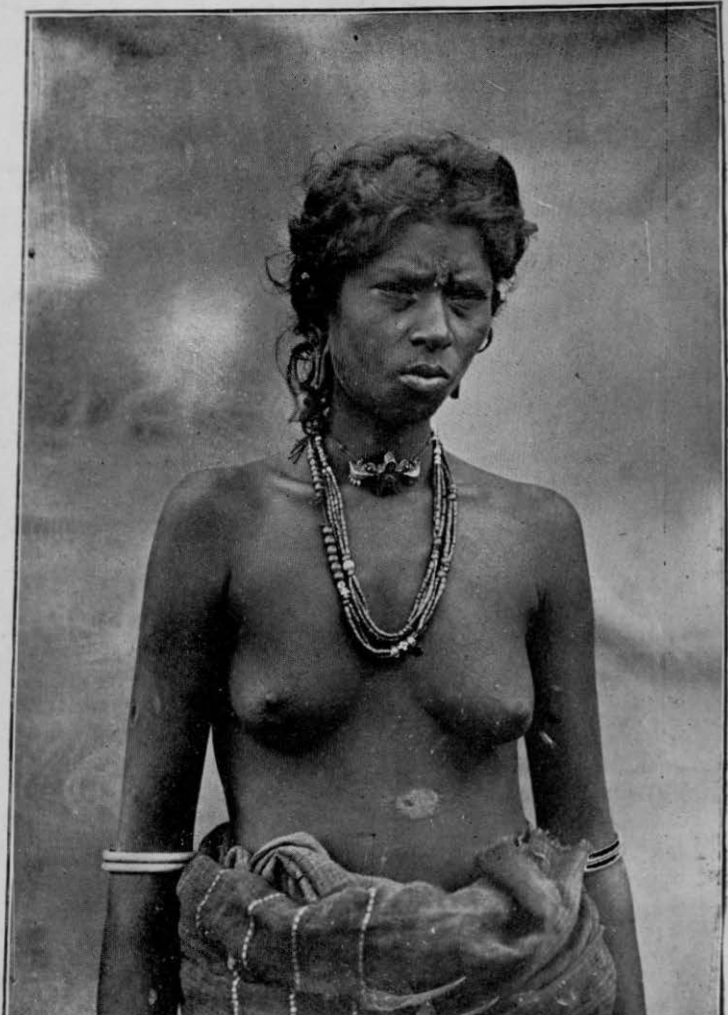
during the rains, they erect a rough shed with the floor raised on poles off the ground, and sloping grass roof, beneath which a fire is kept burning at night, not only for warmth, but also to keep off wild beasts. They are expert at making rapidly improvised shelters at the base of hollow trees by cutting away the wood on one side with a bill-hook. Thus protected, they were quite snug and happy during a heavy shower, while we were miserable amid the drippings from an umbrella and a mango tree.

Savari is a common name among the Tinnevelly Paliyans as among other Tamils. It is said to be a corruption of Xavier, but Savari or Sabari are recognised names of Siva and Parvati. There is a temple called Savarimalayan on the Travancore boundary, whereat the festival takes place at the same time as the festival in honour of St. Xavier among Roman Catholics. The women are very timid in the presence of Europeans, and suffer further from hippophobia; the sight of a horse, which they say is as tall as a mountain, like an elephant, producing a regular stampede into the depths of the jungle. They carry their babies slung in a cloth on the back, and not astride the hips according to the common practice of the plains. The position, in confinement, is to sit on a rock with legs dependent. Many of these Paliyans suffer from jungle fever, as a protection against which they wear a piece of turmeric tied round the neck. The dead are buried, and a stone is placed on the grave, which is never re-visited.

Like other primitive tribes, the Paliyans are short of stature and dolichocephalic, and the archaic type of nose persists in some individuals.

Average height 150·9 cm. Nasal index 83 (max. 100).

Pallan.—The Pallans are "a class of agricultural labourers found chiefly in Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Madura



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and Tinnevelly. They are also fairly numerous in parts of Salem and Coimbatore, but in the remaining Tamil districts they are found only in very small numbers." *

The name is said to be derived from pallam, a pit, as they were standing on low ground when the castes were originally formed. It is further suggested that the name may be connected with the wet cultivation, at which they are experts, and which is always carried out on low ground. In the Manual of the Madura district (1868), the Pallans are described as "a very numerous, but a most abject and despised race, little, if indeed at all, superior to the Paraiyas. Their principal occupation is ploughing the lands of more fortunate Tamils, and, though nominally free, they are usually slaves in almost every sense of the word, earning by the ceaseless sweat of their brow a bare handful of grain to stay the pangs of hunger, and a rag with which to partly cover their nakedness. They are to be found in almost every village, toiling and moiling for the benefit of Vellālans and others, and with the Paraiyas doing patiently nearly all the hard and dirty work that has to be done. Personal contact with them is avoided by all respectable men, and they are never permitted to dwell within the limits of a village nattam. Their huts form a small detached hamlet, the Pallachēri, removed from a considerable distance from the houses of the respectable inhabitants, and barely separated from that of the Paraiyas, the Parei-chēri. The Pallans are said by some to have sprung from the intercourse of a Sudra and a Brāhman woman. Others say Dēvendra created them for the purpose of labouring in behalf of Vellālans. Whatever may have been their origin, it seems to be tolerably certain that in ancient

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* Madras Census Report, 1891.

times they were the slaves of the Vellālans, and regarded by them merely as chattels, and that they were brought by the Vellālans into the Pāndya-mandala." Some Pallans say that they are, like the Kallans, of the lineage of Indra, and that their brides wear a wreath of flowers in token thereof. They consider themselves superior to Paraiyans and Chakkiliyans, as they do not eat beef.

It is stated in the Manual of Tanjore (1883) that the "Pallan and Paraiya are rival castes, each claiming superiority over the other; and a deadly and never-ending conflict in the matter of caste privileges exists between them. They are prædial labourers, and are employed exclusively in the cultivation of paddy (rice) lands. Their women are considered to be particularly skilled in planting and weeding, and, in most parts of the delta, they alone are employed in those operations. The Palla women expose their body above the waist—a distinctive mark of their primitive condition of slavery, of which, however, no trace now exists." It is noted by Mr. G. T. Mackenzie * that "in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the female converts to Christianity in the extreme south ventured, contrary to the old rules for the lower castes, to clothe themselves above the waist. This innovation was made the occasion for threats, violence, and a series of disturbances. Similar disturbances arose from the same cause nearly thirty years later, and, in 1859, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Governor of Madras, interfered, and granted permission to the women of lower caste to wear a cloth over the breasts and shoulders."

In connection with disputes between the right-hand and left-hand factions, it is stated † that "whatever the

* Christianity in Travancore, 1901.

† Gazetteer of the Trichinopoly district.

origin of the factions, feeling still runs very high, especially between the Pallans and the Paraiyans. The violent scenes which occurred in days gone by * no longer occur, but quarrels occur when questions of precedence arise (as when holy food is distributed at festivals to the village goddesses), or if a man of one faction takes a procession down a street inhabited chiefly by members of the other. In former times, members of the opposite faction would not live in the same street, and traces of this feeling are still observable. Formerly also the members of one faction would not salute those of the other, however much their superiors in station; and the menials employed at funerals (Paraiyans, etc.) would not salute the funeral party if it belonged to the rival faction."

In the Coimbatore Manual it is noted that "the Pallan has in all times been a serf, labouring in the low wet lands (pallam) for his masters, the Brāhmans and Goundans. The Pallan is a stout, shortish black man, sturdy, a meat-eater, and not over clean in person or habit; very industrious in his favourite wet lands. He is no longer a serf." The occupations of the Pallans, whom I examined at Coimbatore, were cultivator, gardener, cooly, blacksmith, railway porter, tandal (tax-collector, etc.), and masālchi (office peon, who looks after lamps, ink-bottles, etc.). Some Pallans are maniyagārans (village munsifs or magistrates).

In some places a Pallan family is attached to a land-holder, for whom they work, and, under ordinary conditions, they do not change masters. The attachment of the Pallan to a particular individual is maintained by the master paying a sum of money as an advance, which the Pallan is unable to repay.

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* *See* Nelson, the Madura Country, II, 4—7, and Coimbatore District Manual, 477.

The Pallans are the Jāti Pillais of the Pāndya Kammālans, or Kammālans of the Madura country. The story goes that a long while ago the headman of the Pallans came begging to the Kollan section of the Pāndya Kammālans, which was employed in the manufacture of ploughs and other agricultural implements, and said "Worshipful sirs, we are destitute to the last degree. If you would but take pity on us, we would become your slaves. Give us ploughs and other implements, and we shall ever afterwards obey you." The Kollans, taking pity on them, gave them the implements and they commenced an agricultural life. When the harvest was over, they brought the best portion of the crop, and gave it to the Kollans. From that time, the Pallans became the "sons" of the Pāndya Kammālans, to whom even now they make offerings in gratitude for a bumper crop.

At times of census the Pallans return a number of sub-divisions, and there is a proverb that one can count the number of varieties of rice, but it is impossible to count the divisions of the Pallans. As examples of the sub-divisions, the following may be quoted:—

Aiya, father.

Ammā, mother.

Anja, father.

Atta, mother.

Dēvendra.—The sweat of Dēvendra, the king of gods, is said to have fallen on a plant growing in water from which arose a child, who is said to have been the original ancestor of the Pallans.

Kadaiyan, lowest or last.

Konga.—The Kongas of Coimbatore wear a big marriage tāli, said to be the emblem of Sakti, while the other sections wear a small tāli.

Manganādu, territorial.

Sōzhia, territorial.

Tondamān, territorial.

These sub-divisions are endogamous, and Aiya and Ammā Pallans of the Sivaganga zemindāri and adjacent parts of the Madura district possess exogamous septs or kīlais, which, like those of the Maravans, Kallans, and some other castes, run in the female line. Children belong to the same kīlai as that of their mother and maternal uncle, and not of their father.

The headman of the Pallans is, in the Madura country, called Kudumban, and he is assisted by a Kālādi, and, in large settlements, by a caste messenger entitled Vāriyan, who summons people to attend council-meetings, festivals, marriages and funerals. The offices of Kudumban and Kālādi are hereditary. When a family is under a ban of excommunication, pending enquiry, the caste people refuse to give them fire, and otherwise help them, and even the barber and washerman are not permitted to work for them. As a sign of excommunication, a bunch of leafy twigs of margosa (*Melia Azadirachta*) is stuck in the roof over the entrance to the house. Restoration to caste necessitates a purificatory ceremony, in which cow's urine is sprinkled by the Vāriyan. When a woman is charged with adultery, the offending man is brought into the midst of the assembly, and tied to a harrow or hoeing plank. The woman has to carry a basket of earth or rubbish, with her cloth tied so as to reach above her knees. She is sometimes, in addition, beaten on the back with tamarind switches. If she confesses her guilt, and promises not to misconduct herself again, the Vāriyan cuts the waist-thread of her paramour, who ties it round her neck as if it was a tāli (marriage badge). On the following day, the man and

woman are taken early in the morning to a tank (pond) or well, near which seven small pits are made, and filled with water. The Vāriyan sprinkles some of the water over their heads, and has subsequently to be fed at their expense. If the pair are in prosperous circumstances, a general feast is insisted on.

At Coimbatore, the headman is called Pattakāran, and he is assisted by various subordinate officers and a caste messenger called Ōdumpillai. In cases of theft, the guilty person has to carry a man on his back round the assembly, while two persons hang on to his back-hair. He is beaten on the cheeks, and the Ōdumpillai may be ordered to spit in his face. A somewhat similar form of punishment is inflicted on a man proved guilty of having intercourse with a married woman.

In connection with the caste organisation of the Pallans in the Trichinopoly district, Mr. F. R. Hemingway writes as follows. "They generally have three or more headmen for each village, over whom is the Nāttu Mūppan. Each village also has a peon called Ōdumpillai (the runner). The main body of the caste, when attending council-meetings, is called ilam katchi (the inexperienced). The village councils are attended by the Mūppans and the Nāttu Mūppan. Between the Nāttu Mūppan and the ordinary Mūppans, there is, in the Karūr tāluk, a Pulli Mūppan. All these offices are hereditary. In this tāluk a rather different organisation is in force, to regulate the supply of labour to the landholders. Each of the village Mūppans has a number of karais or sections of the wet-land of the village under him, and he is bound to supply labourers for all the land in his karai, and is remunerated by the landowner with $1\frac{1}{4}$ marakkāls of grain for every 20 kalams harvested. The Mūppans do not work themselves, but maintain discipline among their

men by flogging or expulsion from the caste. In the Karūr tāluk, the ordinary Pallans are called Manvettaikārans (mamoty or digging-tool men)."

The Pallans have their own washermen and barbers, who are said to be mainly recruited from the Sōzhia section, which, in consequence, holds an inferior position; and a Pallan belonging to another section would feel insulted if he was called a Sōzhian.

When a Pallan girl, at Coimbatore, attains puberty, she is bathed, dressed in a cloth brought by a washerwoman, and presented with flowers and fruits by her relations. She occupies a hut constructed of cocoanut leaves, branches of *Pongamia glabra*, and wild sugarcane (*Saccharum arundinaceum*). Her dietary includes jaggery (crude sugar) and milk and plantains. On the seventh day she is again bathed, and presented with another cloth. The hut is burnt down, and for three days she occupies a corner of the pial of her home. On the eleventh day she is once more bathed, presented with new cloths by her relations, and permitted to enter the house.

It is stated by Dr. G. Oppert* that "at a Pallar wedding, before the wedding is actually performed, the bridegroom suddenly leaves his house and starts for some distant place, as if he had suddenly abandoned his intention of marrying, in spite of the preparations that had been made for the wedding. His intended father-in-law intercepts the young man on his way, and persuades him to return, promising to give his daughter as a wife. To this the bridegroom consents." I have not met with this custom in the localities in which the Pallans have been examined.

* Original Inhabitants of Bharatavarsa or India.

In one form of marriage among the Pallans of the Madura district, the bridegroom's sister goes to the house of the bride on an auspicious day, taking with her the tāli string, a new cloth, betel, fruits and flowers. She ties the tāli round the neck of the bride, who, if a milk-post has been set up, goes round it. The bride is then conducted to the house of the bridegroom, where the couple sit together on the marriage dais, and coloured water, or coloured rice balls with lighted wicks, are waved round them. They then go, with linked fingers, thrice round the dais. In a more complicated form of marriage ceremonial, the parents and maternal uncle of the bridegroom, proceed, on the occasion of the betrothal, to the bride's house with rice, fruit, plantains, a cocoanut, sandal paste, and turmeric. These articles are handed over, with the bride's money, to the Kudumban or Kālādi of her village. Early in the morning of the wedding day, a pandal (booth) is erected, and the milk-post, made of *Thespesia populnea* or *Mimusops hexandra*, is set up by the maternal uncles of the contracting couple. The bride and bridegroom bring some earth, with which the marriage dais is made. These preliminaries concluded, they are anointed by their maternal uncles, and, after bathing, the wrist-threads (kankanam) are tied to the bridegroom's wrist by his brother-in-law, and to that of the bride by her sister-in-law. Four betel leaves and areca nuts are placed at each corner of the dais, and the pair go round it three times, saluting the betel as they pass. They then take their place on the dais, and two men stretch a cloth over their heads. They hold out their hands, into the palms of which the Kudumban or Kālādi pours a little water from a vessel, some of which is sprinkled over their heads. The vessel is then waved before them, and they

are garlanded by the maternal uncles, headmen, and others. The bride is taken into the house, and her maternal uncle sits at the entrance, and measures a new cloth, which he gives to her. She clads herself in it, and her uncle, lifting her in his arms, carries her to the dais, where she is placed by the side of the bridegroom. The fingers of the contracting couple are linked together beneath a cloth held by the maternal uncles. The tāli is taken up by the bridegroom, and placed by him round the bride's neck, to be tightly tied thereon by his sister. Just before the tāli is tied, the headman bawls out "May I look into the bride's money and presents"? and, on receiving permission to do so, says thrice "Seven bags of nuts, seven bags of rice, etc., have been brought."

At a marriage among the Konga Pallans of Coimbatore, the bridegroom's wrist-thread is tied on at his home, after a lamp has been worshipped. He and his party proceed to the house of the bride, taking with them a new cloth, a garland of flowers, and the tāli. The milk-post of the pandal is made of milk-hedge (*Euphorbia Tirucalli*). The bride and bridegroom sit side by side and close together on planks within the pandal. The bridegroom ties the wrist-thread on the bride's wrist, and the caste barber receives betel from their mouths in a metal vessel. In front of them are placed a Pillayar (figure of Ganēsa) made of cow-dung, two plantains, seven cocoanuts, a measure of paddy, a stalk of *Andropogon Sorghum* with a betel leaf stuck on it, and seven sets of betel leaves and areca nuts. Camphor is burnt, and two cocoanuts are broken, and placed before the Pillayar. The tāli is taken round to be blessed in a piece of one of the cocoanuts. The Mannādi (assistant headman) hands over the tāli to the bridegroom, who ties it round the

bride's neck. Another cocoanut is then broken. Three vessels containing, respectively, raw rice, turmeric water and milk, each with pieces of betel leaf, are brought. The hands of the contracting couple are then linked together beneath a cloth, and the fourth cocoanut is broken. The Mannādi, taking up a little of the rice, turmeric water, milk, and betel leaves, waves them before the bride and bridegroom, and throws them over their heads. This is likewise done by five other individuals, and the fifth cocoanut is broken. The bride and bridegroom go round the plank, and again seat themselves. Their hands are unlinked, the wrist-threads are untied, and thrown into a vessel of milk. The sixth cocoanut is then broken. Cooked rice with plantains and ghī (clarified butter) is offered to Alli Arasani, the wife of Arjuna, who was famed for her virtue. The rice is offered three times to the contracting couple, who do not eat it. The caste barber brings water, with which they cleanse their mouths. They exchange garlands, and the seventh cocoanut is broken. They are then taken within the house, and sit on a new mat. The bridegroom is again conducted to the pandal, where cooked rice and other articles are served to him on a tripod stool. They are handed over to the Ōdumpillai as a perquisite, and all the guests are fed. In the evening a single cloth is tied to the newly married couple, who bathe, and pour water over each other's heads. The Pillayar, lamp, paddy, *Andropogon* stalk, and two trays with betel, are placed before the guests. The Mannādi receives four annas from the bridegroom's father, and, after mentioning the names of the bridegroom, his father and grandfather, places it in one of the trays, which belongs to the bride's party. He then receives four annas from the bride's father, and mentions the names of the bride, her father

and grandfather, before placing the money in the tray which belongs to the bridegroom's party. The relations then make presents of money to the bride and bridegroom. When a widow remarries, her new husband gives her a white cloth, and ties a yellow string round her neck in the presence of some of the castemen.

At a marriage among the Kadaiya Pallans of Coimbatore, the wrist-thread of the bride is tied on by the Mannādi. She goes to a Pillayar shrine, and brings back three trays full of sand from the courtyard thereof, which is heaped up in the marriage pandal. Three painted earthen pots, and seven small earthen trays, are brought in procession from the Mannādi's house by the bridegroom, and placed in the pandal. To each of the two larger pots a piece of turmeric and betel leaf are tied, and nine kinds of grain are placed in them. The bridegroom has brought with him the tāli tied to a cocoanut, seven rolls of betel, seven plantains, seven pieces of turmeric, a garland, a new cloth for the bride, etc. The linked fingers of the contracting couple are placed on a tray containing salt and a ring. They go thrice round a lamp and the plank within the pandal, and retire within the house where the bridegroom is served with food on a leaf. What remains after he has partaken thereof is given to the bride on the same leaf. The wrist-threads are untied on the third day, and a Pillayar made of cow-dung is carried to a river, whence the bride brings back a pot of water.

In some places, the bridegroom is required to steal something from the bride's house when they return home after the marriage, and the other party has to repay the compliment on some future occasion.

When a death occurs among the Konga Pallans of Coimbatore, the big toes and thumbs of the corpse are

tied together. A lighted lamp, a metal vessel with raw rice, jaggery, and a broken cocoanut are placed near its head. Three pieces of firewood, arranged in the form of a triangle, are lighted, and a small pot is placed on them, wherein some rice is cooked in turmeric water. The corpse is bathed, and placed in a pandal made of four plantain trees, and four green leafy branches. The nearest relations place a new cloth over it. If the deceased has left a widow, she is presented with a new cloth by her brother. The corpse is laid on a bier, the widow washes its feet, and drinks some of the water. She then throws her tāli-string on the corpse. Her face is covered with a cloth, and she is taken into the house. The corpse is then removed to the burial-ground, where the son is shaved, and the relations place rice and water in the mouth of the corpse. It is then laid in the grave, which is filled in, and a stone and some thorny twigs are placed over it. An earthen pot full of water is placed on the right shoulder of the son, who carries it three times round the grave. Each time that he reaches the head end thereof, a hole is made in the pot with a knife by one of the elders. The pot is then thrown down, and broken near the spot beneath which the head lies. Near this spot the son places a lighted firebrand, and goes away without looking back. He bathes and returns to the house, where he touches a little cow-dung placed at the entrance with his right foot, and worships a lamp. On the third day, three handfuls of rice, a brinjal (*Solanum Melongena*) fruit cut into three pieces, and leaves of *Sesbania grandiflora* are cooked in a pot, and carried to the grave together with a tender cocoanut, cigar, betel, and other things. The son places three leaves on the grave, and spreads the various articles thereon. Crows are attracted by clapping the hands,

and it is considered a good omen if they come and eat. On the fourth day the son bathes, and sits on a mat. He then bites, and spits out some roasted salt fish three times into a pot of water. This is supposed to show that mourning has been cast away, or at the end. He is then presented with new cloths by his uncle and other relations. On the ninth or eleventh day, cooked rice, betel, etc., are placed near a bābūl (*Acacia arabica*) or other thorny tree, which is made to represent the deceased. Seven small stones, representing the seven Hindu sages, are set up. A cocoanut is broken, and pūja performed. The rice is served on a leaf, and eaten by the son and other near relations.

The Pallans are nominally Saivites, but in reality devil worshippers, and do pūja to the Grāma Dēvāta (village deities), especially those whose worship requires the consumption of flesh and liquor.

It is recorded,* in connection with a biennial festival in honour of the local goddess at Āttūr in the Madura district, that "some time before the feast begins, the Pallans of the place go round to the adjoining villages, and collect the many buffaloes, which have been dedicated to the goddess during the last two years, and have been allowed to graze unmolested, and where they willed, in the fields. These are brought in to Āttur, and one of them is selected, garlanded, and placed in the temple. On the day of the festival, this animal is brought out, led round the village in state, and then, in front of the temple, is given three cuts with a knife by a Chakkiliyan, who has fasted that day, to purify himself for the rite. The privilege of actually killing the animal belongs by immemorial usage to the head of the family

* Gazetteer of the Madura district.

of the former poligar of Nilakkōttai, but he deputes certain Pallans to take his place, and they fall upon the animal and slay it."

It is noted by Mr. Hemingway * that the Valaiyans and the class of Pallans known as Kāladis who live in the south-western portion of the Pudukkōttai State are professional cattle-lifters. They occasionally take to burglary for a change.

The common titles of the Pallans are said † to be "Mūppan and Kudumban, and some style themselves Mannādi. Kudumban is probably a form of Kurumban, and Mannādi is a corruption of Manrādi, a title borne by the Pallava (Kurumban) people. It thus seems not improbable that the Pallas are representatives of the old Pallavas or Kurumbas."

Pallavarāyan.—The title, meaning chief of the Pallavas, of the leader of the Krishnavakakkar in Travancore. Also a sub-division of Ōcchans.

Palle.—In the Telugu country, there are two classes of Palles, which are employed respectively in sea-fishing and agriculture. The former, who are the Mīn (fish) Palles of previous writers, are also known as Palle Kariyalu, and do not mingle or intermarry with the latter. They claim for themselves a higher position than that which is accorded to them by other castes, and call themselves Agnikula Kshatriyas. Their title is, in some places, Reddi. All belong to one gōtra called Ravikula.

The caste headman is entitled Pedda Kāpu, and he is assisted by an Oomadi.

In puberty, marriage, and death ceremonies, the Palles follow the Telugu form of ceremonial. There is, however, one rite in the marriage ceremonies, which

* *Op cit.* † Madras Census Report, 1891.

is said to be peculiar to the fishing section. On the fifth day after marriage, a Golla pērantālu (married woman) is brought to the house in procession, walking on cloths spread on the ground (nadapāvada). She anoints the bridal couple with ghī (clarified butter), and after receiving a cloth as a present, goes away.

The fishing class worship the Akka Dēvatalu (sister gods) periodically by floating on the surface of the water a flat framework made of sticks tied together, on which the various articles used in the worship are placed.

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